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South Africa welcomes the world

THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH

PLUS

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June 2010

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BY THE TIME you read this, the 2010 World Cup finals will be well under way. It's no exaggeration to call the World Cup the greatest show on earth. The Olympics may feature acts of individual brilliance but the World Cup captures the hearts and minds of the entire planet. The greatest game played on the biggest stage of all.

The prize of hosting the World Cup gets bigger with every tournament. Already, the current campaigns for 2018 and 2022 have featured casualties. Australia are the latest to pull out of the race for 2018, leaving England as the favourites.

The furore over Lord Triesman's departure from England's campaign has quickly died down – and it will be completely forgotten by the end of the World Cup. But the affair should serve to highlight genuine concerns over the bidding process.

It's 15 years since the Olympic bribery scandal broke. While the International Olympic Committee has more than 200 members, FIFA relies on a far smaller body to take its most important decisions.

The fate of the World Cup bids will be decided by a vote of FIFA's 23 executive committee members, plus Sepp Blatter. That's 24 middle-aged men who, with very few exceptions, have risen from football's amateur ranks and now enjoy a first-class, five-star lifestyle funded by FIFA.

FIFA, protected by Swiss law, remains a highly secretive organisation – we still do not know exactly how much president Blatter is paid in salary and bonuses every year – and that provides constant fuel for the rumour-mongers and whispering campaigns.

We've crammed a lot into this issue. We've added extra pages to review the European season and next month we'll do the same with the South American leagues – as well as the small matter of the World Cup in South Africa. We'll record every goal and every game in our essential souvenir edition.

GAVIN HAMILTON, Editor
gavin_hamilton@ipcmedia.com

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...IN PICTURES

The global game caught on camera

Vuvuzela mania…young fans enjoy Africa's first-ever World Cup despite reports that supporters attending matches risk permanent damage to their hearing via the vuvuzela horns

Presidential wishes...the USA World Cup squad receive a White House send off from president Barack Obama, vice-president Joe Biden and former president Bill Clinton

End of the line...Fulham's Europa dream is over after Diego Forlan's goal in Hamburg

Ivory agony...Didier Drogba (right) has his elbow broken in a challenge with Japan's Tulio Tanaka

Good in the air...the Mountain Villages international tournament takes place in Gspon in the Swiss Alps. These seven-a-side games are played on the highest football pitch in Europe and can only be reached by cable car or a 45-minute walk

Chilled out...France prepare for the World Cup with the ultimate in altitude acclimatisation

Top dogs...holders Estudiantes take on Internacional in the Libertadores Cup

Brian Glanville

...on the apology for a World Cup ball...Triesman's departure from the FA...the paucity of options for Fabio Capello...and Blackpool's promotion

New ball...Australia keeper Mark Schwarzer finds the controversial Jubilani ball too hot to handle in a friendly against the USA

SO WHOSE OPINION would you accept? That of the ineffable Jerome Valcke, not long ago lacerated for alleged lying in a New York court by an implacable female judge over the Visa-MasterCard case, or that of Dunga, a former World Cup winner as a player and now coach of the Brazil World Cup team, supported by such eminent goalkeepers as England's David James, Tim Howard of the USA, his deputy and the USA's centre-back?

The excellent Brazil keeper Julio Cesar and their centre-forward Luis Fabiano are other distinguished critics. They all insist the new Adidas ball wished on the World Cup by FIFA – the so-called "Jabulani" – is an unpredictable nightmare whose trajectory is often impossible to predict.

With monumental impertinence, Valcke has accused Dunga of looking for excuses were Brazil not to win the competition. How cheap can you get? Dunga's scornful reply has put the wretched apparatchik in his place; and how can Valcke respond to the growing regiment of others who have damned the new ball?

Gone...Triesman

You may recall the circumstances of Valcke and corpulent CONCACAF man Chuck Blazer's humiliation in that New York court. They were trying to swing FIFA away from their valid and long-standing agreement with MasterCard in favour of Visa. They failed ignominiously.

You may also remember that when Valcke returned to FIFA HQ in Zurich he was temporarily suspended...only for the smoke soon to clear and him to be installed in his present exalted position. No one seems officially to have complained about that. So Sepp Blatter continues to do pretty well what he likes and now we are to be lumbered with him for another four years. Meanwhile, what sort of a World Cup is it likely to be with this apology for a football flying around?

"Valcke has accused Dunga of looking for excuses. How cheap can you get?"

WELL, Triesman has gone and good riddance. Gone, not in a blaze of glory but in a haze of fatuity – not to say betrayal. Yes, it was a cheap act of treachery for his paramour to record his idiocies and sell them, inevitably, via the egregious Max Clifford. But whatever could have possessed the old ass to blurt out such manifest rubbish, alleging a World Cup plot between the Spaniards and the Russians? That alone was surely enough to show that he was not fit for office, as though one ever doubted it.

When it comes to football conspiracies, I am hardly the one to plead non-involvement since, as I am sure readers will remember, my American, multilingual colleague Keith Botsford and I spent years in the 1970s investigating the notorious Lobo-Solti case of 1974, involving Juventus, and the various referee bribings by Inter before it.

But at least we had solid information. Where was Triesman's? Why, in the first instance, did a Spain team which should surely start as favourites in South Africa even need to bribe referees? And why – even though we know that Spain is in an economic crisis still worse than our own – would they go to the Russians, of all people, for financial help?

Triesman was wished – no, foisted – on the FA with no football background of any substance and with several dubious years behind him as, of all things, a paid-up communist. How could any half-aware person, even if he attended that then-hotbed of radicalism, the University of Essex, become a communist, so many years after the atrocities of Stalin and Lenin has been so plainly revealed?

The bleak truth is that we haven't had a decent leader at the FA since Stanley Rous retired in 1962 to become the president of FIFA. His successor, in an absurd compromise, was Denis Follows, then the FA treasurer, formerly chief executive of the British Pilots Association, though

he never, so far as I know, even flew a flag. After Follows, what a dismal succession of incompetents and mediocrities. Ted Croker made promises – such as how over-mighty Wembley would be brought into line – which were never implemented. Graham Kelly ("The Jelly" as I nicknamed him), though previously main man at the Football League, paved the way for the Greed Is Good League, gave free rein to Charlie Hughes' ghastly long-ball coaching orthodoxy, inexplicably turned up in court to speak in defence of a Brentford player who had smashed up the face of a Torquay United opponent and, finally, was forced out after he and the coroner-chairman were found to have offered money to the Welsh FA for help in a European election.

So to Adam Crozier, whose monument is ultra-expensive, unnecessary Soho Square and its offices; Mark Palios of the sexual scandal, exacerbated when he tried to put the blame on ever-amorous Sven Goran Eriksson; and Brian Barwick, who came from sports television and was responsible for the doomed appointment of Steve McClaren, hopelessly out of his depth and cruelly remembered from Wembley that wet night as "The Wally With The Brolly". He has redeemed himself in Holland, but far too late, alas, for England.

And so, disastrously, to the political Triesman and his temptress.

I HAVE no great hopes for this England team, nor can I see that Fabio Capello has transformed it. Hardly his fault that, Wayne Rooney emphatically apart, there's not a single convincing striker in the squad. How ironic that Emile Heskey, recalled to the squad despite such a poor season with Aston Villa, should have been instrumental, in all innocence, in the injuring of Rio Ferdinand's left knee, thus ruling the captain out of the whole tournament.

The old, effective Ferdinand would beyond doubt have been seriously missed. However, the current Ferdinand, troubled by a painful back and a catalogue of other injuries, played only 13 Premier League games for Manchester United last season, his previously formidable pace affected.

I wish I could join in the general enthusiasm about Ledley King but he seemed off the pace against Mexico at Wembley and, though he has battled bravely through his severe knee problems, to use him in so demanding a tournament must surely be a risk.

What a pity it took Capello so long to call up Michael Dawson, and only at the 11th hour. After John Terry, he

Injured...Ferdinand (far right)

seems to me probably the best of England's centre-backs, but is yet to be given an international game so the odds are against him being deployed.

It would probably be sensible to exploit the fact that Joe Cole, as he clearly showed against Japan in Graz, is manifestly in form, even if Ancelotti at Chelsea has been so reluctant to use him. But the very fact that he missed so much of the season may be to his advantage in terms of physical freshness; and who else in this squad is capable of creative midfield play?

BLACKPOOL in their Wembley play-off won a splendid sentimental victory and, at last after 39 years, are back in the top division.

How were the mighty fallen. As a young fan, I was brought up on the wartime triumphs of Stanley Matthews, burly centre-forward Jock Dodds and the inventive Ronnie Dix, of Spurs, then a guest, like Matthews.

And now? In the play-off Final, Blackpool beat Cardiff City in a match replete with errors by both sides, though their first goal – superbly struck by Charlie Adam, who Rangers were daft enough to sell them for a mere £500,000 – was memorable; as was the impassioned post-victory monologue by the inimitable Ian Holloway, their manager.

But only the perversity of the play-offs allowed Blackpool to be there at all. They had, after all, finished only sixth – fully nine points behind Nottingham Forest, who they doubly beat in the semi-final. All those years ago, their average crowd of some 30,000 was considered small. Today, Bloomfield Road holds a pitiful 12,000. Yet somehow, 35,000 – where did they all come from? – followed them to Wembley. The club must rebuild fast, but how fast and to what extent?

Meanwhile, perhaps they can resurrect the two bulky, grey-haired, white-coated ice cream salesmen – or was it sausages? – who, all those years ago, stood behind their goal at a penalty, waving their arms and yelling, to put the kicker off. Failing another Matthews, maybe these men, or their descendants, can be pressed into service next season. They might well be needed. ●

GOALS
WE'D LIKE TO SEE AGAIN...

Spectacular...Junuzovic

1 Zlatko Junuzovic, Austria Wien v Mattersburg
Starts the move, continues his run and then finishes with exquisite control and an overhead kick with his back to goal

2 Inca, Sol de America v Olimpia
A right-footed free-kick from the centre circle that flies into the top corner

3 Ganso, Santos v Gremio
A neat one-two before he lets rip with a left-foot drive into the top corner

4 Jesus Navas, Sevilla v Atletico Madrid
Intercepts the ball on halfway before accelerating away from his marker and rounding the keeper

Long way round...Navas

5 Angel Di Maria, Argentina v Canada
A 20-yard shot with the outside of his boot into the top corner

6 David Silva, Spain v Poland
Exhibition football at its very best in the World Cup warm-up

Quality... Silva (centre)

AND THE MISS OF THE MONTH...

Botafogo defender Antonio Carlos ***probably doesn't get too many opportunities to score, but he'll never get an easier chance than the one against Goias, which he managed to miss from four yards out***

To see clips of these goals, visit www.worldsoccer.com

NUMBERS GAME

136
games since a team coached by Jose Mourinho have lost a league match at home

6
FA Cup Final victories enjoyed by Ashley Cole – a record for the competition

970
managers sacked in English football since Alex Ferguson was installed in the Manchester United hot seat in November 1986

16
per cent possession for Internazionale in their Champions League semi-final, second leg against Barcelona. The Italians won the tie 3-2 on aggregate

17.1 million
supporters attending the 1,656 Football League matches in the 2009-10 English season; an increase of 4.4 per cent on the previous year and the highest aggregate crowd figure since the 1959-60 campaign

£1.1 billion
the total amount owed by the Glazer family after it was revealed that £400million has been borrowed via mortgages on 63 of their 64 shopping malls

REPORTS we couldn't make up

At the double...Orellana

TWO'S COMPANY

Fabian Orellana and Felipe Gutierrez made history last month when they played twice in one day for Chile.

As part of their World Cup preparations, Chile played Northern Ireland in Chillan. A few hours later, they played Israel in Concepcion. Coach Marcelo Bielsa fielded two different starting line-ups as he tried to decide on his final 23-man squad. Orellana and Gutierrez appeared as substitutes in both games; only Orellana made the final 23 for South Africa.

Pants...Marseille's Mathieu Valbuena, a surprise inclusion in France's World Cup squad, models his own men's underwear range, which is on sale in a shop in Marseille

Korea change...Kim can only play in goal

KEEPING SCORE

FIFA has told North Korea that Kim Myong-won can only play as a goalkeeper at the World Cup after he was named as one of the country's three keepers. FIFA believes Kim is the same player who had three substitute outings in the qualifying campaign.

Yet it is not uncommon for North Koreans to share the same name. The 23-man World Cup squad includes two players named Pak Nam-chol, one a defender and one a midfielder.

RUMOURS we'd like to believe

On the way out...Mexes

- Sources in the Italian capital suggest Roma's out-of-favour French libero Philippe Mexes is to be offloaded. Interested clubs may be Milan, Juventus or long-shot Panathinaikos.

- *Kicker* magazine in Germany claims Hamburg are ready to spend some of the £12million received from Manchester City for defender Jerome Boateng on PSV Eindhoven's Dutch midfielder Ibrahim Afellay.

- Arjen Robben is telling anyone who wants to listen that fellow Holland international Rafael Van der Vaart is keen on a move to Bayern Munich.

- According to *France Football*, Lille's brilliant young Belgian creator Eden Hazard may soon be sold for £30m to Manchester United, Chelsea or Real Madrid – but only if he is loaned back to the Lillois for 2010-11.

- Portuguese sports daily *Record* say that Benfica are to make a £9.5m offer to Mexican club America for their top-rated international keeper Guillermo Ochoa.

Benfica-bound...Ochoa

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at the World Cup

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- Follow the tournament online at our special World Cup website at www.worldsoccer.com

- Follow Gavin Hamilton on Twitter @WorldSoccerEd

AHEAD OF THE GAME SINCE 1960

Jim Holden

Time to get serious

ENGLISH SPORT, in its hour of need, turned to a noble hero to rescue fond ambitions of hosting the 2018 World Cup. But the man in question wasn't an ex-player, of course; it was Lord Coe, known to most of the world as Sebastian Coe when he was winning 1,500m Olympic gold medals, but now a well-connected, fiercely intelligent and worldly wise sporting politician of the highest calibre.

It was Coe whose astute back-room manoeuvres and inspirational final-day speech delivered the 2012 Olympic Games to London.

It was Coe to whom the Football Association swiftly looked for strength when its independent chairman, Lord Triesman, was forced to quit after an embarrassing episode in which he was secretly taped by a close friend making wild, if private, allegations about refereeing bribes involving fellow 2018 bidders Spain and Russia.

Triesman may be a Lord but he was also a silly fool, promoted to a position of power for which events proved he was unsuited – not just because of the grotesque manner of his demise, but also because of the way he thoroughly alienated the powerful forces of the Premier League and the former FA chairman Geoff Thompson.

Long before he went, Triesman was a lame duck, a man who had no background from which to influence the affairs of English football; another inconsequential figure who created self-made troubles for which the FA has become notorious.

In the matter of reviving the fortunes of England's bid for the 2018 World Cup, a high-profile role for Coe was a sensible move.

The legend of athletics also loves football (he is a keen Chelsea fan), and was a favourite of FIFA boss Sepp Blatter, having been made the first chairman of the FIFA ethics committee in 2006, a role from which Coe only stepped down when he was invited on to England's 2018 bid team. The chances are that Coe will make England contenders for 2018 in the months ahead of the vote this December. He is widely respected around the world, a man on a level in global recognition with Franz Beckenbauer and Michel Platini.

These men make things happen; not only because they are clever, but also because of the authority derived from their stellar playing and managerial careers. They know what they are talking about. A clear example is the way Platini, now president of UEFA, has used the influence of his football reputation to push through the new Financial Fair Play proposals.

They are the kind of serious heroes long absent from English football, which has suffered grievously as a result. The FA has never had anyone like Beckenbauer or Platini, a charismatic leader with a sporting background strong enough to bring together the game's warring factions. Instead, weakness has been the watchword, with Triesman merely the latest lacklustre non-chief.

Voice of authority...Coe was brought in to help salvage the 2018 World Cup bid

"English football needs a leader with the extra X-factor in the mould of Coe, Platini and Beckenbauer"

Probably the closest England has had to a footballer turned committed administrator is Trevor Brooking, whose organisational talents were used by Sport England before the FA finally brought him on board at the age of 55 a few years ago. Brooking's first specific role was to improve the quality of coaching of English youngsters, but his desire for an overall national plan immediately brought him into conflict with the powerful clubs.

This is a huge issue for English football, perhaps the most important of all. Recent UEFA statistics revealed that England has only 2,769 coaches with the top UEFA coaching qualifications, compared to Spain with 23,995, Italy with 29,420 and Germany with 34,970. The facts are dramatic. England has one elite coach for every 812 footballers, while Spain has one for every 17 players.

Gordon Taylor, the head of the PFA players' union, is alarmed, saying: "There is a link between coaching and quality. The timing of these statistics is really important: the World Cup will bring this to a head, particularly if England do badly. How you do internationally is a reflection of your nation's youth development."

Yet despite wise men like Taylor recognising the crucial significance of this issue, Brooking finds it crushingly tough to make progress.

Brooking is a good man – intelligent, dedicated and honourable. He has refused to walk away despite many setbacks, but he would accept himself he is not an inspirational leader in the mould of Coe, Platini or Beckenbauer.

It is that hero with the extra X-factor that English football so desperately requires. Sadly, it will be a long time coming unless Coe can be persuaded to become the overall boss of the FA once his 2012 Olympic Games commitments are finished. ●

HEROES...

NOEL BAILIE

Linfield's 39-year-old captain, who led his side to a league-and-cup double in Northern Ireland this season, passed the 1,000th-game milestone for his only club.

SAMUEL ETO'O

The Cameroon striker joined Clarence Seedorf as the only player to have won three European Cups, following Internazionale's 2-0 victory over Bayern Munich.

Three-time champion...Eto'o

ROY HODGSON

The Fulham manager recorded arguably the greatest achievement of his career when he steered the London side to the Europa League Final.

DIEGO FORLAN

The Uruguay striker pounced twice – and scored the winning goal late in extra time to clinch the Europa League for Atletico Madrid in Hamburg.

Two-goal hero...Forlan's brace finally sank Fulham

& VILLAINS

KEVIN-PRINCE BOATENG

Ghana's Germany-born Portsmouth midfielder put Germany captain Michael Ballack out of the World Cup with a violent tackle in the FA Cup Final at Wembley.

Falling foul...Ballack (right) suffers as Boateng flies in

DANIEL KIPRICH

The son of ex-Hungary international Joszef Kiprich was given a one-year ban by the Hungarian federation for attempted match fixing. Gyimrot defender Kiprich reportedly offered to pay three players from second division Tatabanya £360 each to fix a match against his team.

Angry...Fenerbahce fans

HAKAN BINGUL

The announcer at Fenerbahce's Sukru Saracoglu stadium mistakenly told the 55,000 crowd in Istanbul that Besiktas had equalised at Bursaspor on the final day of the season, leading everyone to mistakenly believe that Fener had won the title.

YU YANG

The former Happy Valley defender was jailed for 10 months in Hong Kong for trying to bribe an opponent. China-born Yu approached Fourway Rangers' Jean-Jacques Kilam, offering him a bribe to engineer a win for Happy Valley against Fourway Rangers. Kilama refused and Fourway won the match 2-0.

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14 STORIES YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

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Triesman steps down
David Triesman was forced to resign as FA chairman and head of England's 2018 World Cup bid after controversial comments about Spain and Russia. More, pages 8 and 12

FRANCE
Euro 2016
The French beat off bids from Turkey and Italy to be named hosts of the 2016 European Championships. More, page 20

FRANCE
Deschamps does it again
Marseille's former captain led the club to the league title in his first season in charge. More, page 38

PORTUGAL
Benfica end long wait
The Lisbon club celebrated their first league title since 2005, and only their second in 16 years. More, page 94

SPAIN
Champions sign David Villa
Barcelona retained their Liga title and also signed David Villa from Valencia for £34m. More, pages 19 and 30

BRAZIL
Old and new
A Brazilian club is certain to feature in the Libertadores Cup Final. More, page 33

SPAIN
Inter triumph in Madrid
Internazionale won the Champions League after seeing off Bayern Munich in the Final. More, page 48

GERMANY
Atletico adventure
Atletico Madrid beat Fulham in extra time in Hamburg to win the Europa League Final. More, page 52

GERMANY
Wolfsburg hire McClaren
Former England manager Steve McClaren, fresh from title success with Twente in Holland, joined Wolfsburg. More, page 17

GERMANY
King Louis
Dutch coach Van Gaal revived Bavarian pride with a league-and-cup double in Munich. More, page 42

UZBEKISTAN
Scolari leaves Bunyodkor
The Brazilian coach was sacked after his team's second-round exit from the Asian Champions League. More, page 44

ITALY
Inter turn to Benitez
European champions Internazionale appointed former Liverpool manager Rafa Benitez following the departure of Jose Mourinho to Real Madrid

SOUTH AFRICA
Curse of the captain
The World Cup kicked off in Johannesburg without a number of key players who were injured in friendly matches. More, page 74

EGYPT
Mystery date
There was bemusement at CAF's decision to switch the African Nations Cup to a non-World Cup year. More, page 41

Diego Milito
Champions League Final hero gets his due reward at last

ITALY

THE BEST YEARS of his career? He gave them to Zaragoza. With all due respect to the Spanish club, one of the great mysteries of modern football concerns just how Argentina striker Diego Milito managed to spend three seasons (2005 to 2008) with Zaragoza, far from the brightest and biggest European stages on which he has left such an indelible mark this season.

It is not just that Milito has scored 30 goals this term for Internazionale (22 in Serie A, six in the Champions League and two in the Italian Cup); it is much more that so many of those goals have been so important.

When it really mattered, the 31-year-old found the back of the net and he scored the goals which won, in chronological order, the Italian Cup, the Serie A title and the Champions League Final for Inter.

Roma, Siena and Bayern Munich went the way of Chelsea, CSKA Moscow and Barcelona before them, being efficiently struck down by a player who at times this season has seemed almost infallible.

Yet back in the summer of 2005, no one wanted him. Originally spotted while still with Argentinian club Racing by senior Juventus talent scout Franco Ceravolo, *"Il Principe"* aroused little excitement with Juve who, like Udinese, declined his services. And so he ended up in the Italian second division with Genoa in January 2004.

Eighteen months and 33 goals later, it was clear to all with eyes that he was a seriously good player. Yet when Genoa were relegated to Serie C1 by way of punishment for their involvement in an end-of-season match fix with Venezia in the summer of 2005, the Serie A big names ignored him (as the Primera Liga big names were later to do). Milito was offered to Milan, even to Cagliari, but no one was interested and he moved to Spain to join up with younger brother Gabriel (then at Zaragoza, now at Barcelona).

Three years later he rejoined Genoa, just beating the registration deadline for the 2008-09 season. If Italian football had failed to notice him on his previous coming, this time it was different as he scored 24 Serie A goals in a season when Genoa finished joint fourth with Fiorentina.

Not only the critics but more importantly, Jose Mourinho had noticed Milito. As he set about building "his" Inter at the end of last season, one of his first moves was to persuade owner Massimo Moratti to splash out £20million in a deal to bring Milito and Brazilian midfielder Thiago Motta from Genoa to Milan. The rest is this year's history.

Not for nothing are Inter fans currently much pre-occupied with the idea that the "Special One" wants to take Milito with him to Real Madrid. In the meantime, of course, his great season may not be over yet. Diego Maradona willing, an impact at the World Cup would surely make him a shoo-in for one of the annual player of the year awards.

And to those who suggest Rooney, Robben, Ronaldo, Xavi, Torres, Drogba or Messi for such awards – who of these did the treble this season?

Paddy Agnew

The big prize...Milito and son Leandro get to grips with the Champions League trophy

Steve McClaren
Former England coach takes on Wolfsburg challenge

GERMANY

SOME TWO-AND-A-HALF years since suffering a media lynching for failing to secure England's qualification for Euro 2008, Steve McClaren is bloodied and bowed no more. His reputation restored after leading Twente to the Eredivisie title this season – the first in the unfashionable club's history – he was strongly linked to vacancies at West Ham United, Porto, Hamburg and clubs in Turkey, only to finally be unveiled as the new boss of Wolfsburg, the German champions of 2008-09.

McClaren, who still had one year left to run on his contract with Twente, was guaranteed Champions League football if he had stayed. Yet ultimately he decided to trade it in for a post with one of the most thrusting clubs in the ever-booming Bundesliga.

"I've come to Wolfsburg because they are hugely ambitious and have the financial means [the backing of the Volkswagen group] to make their objectives a reality," says McClaren, the first British coach in the German top flight.

"Wolfsburg have put together a strong squad, they play good football and were champions a year ago. However, for me, the all-important question is why they went from first to eighth in the course of last season.

"My job is to find the answers. My aim is a straightforward one: to have us competing at the top end of the table and to get back into Europe.

"I had a great two years at Twente. I couldn't have written a more satisfying script than finishing league runners-up in my first season there and actually winning the title the next. It was a special time at a special club, but now another challenge has come along at Wolfsburg and I'm 100 per cent ready for it."

Making a success of his latest brief will not be easy. Under his predecessor Armin Veh, Wolfsburg completely lost their bearings last term and more often than not were painful to watch, cavalier at the back, lacking in confidence and unity, and inexplicably profligate on their home turf, where they lost more games than they won.

Another sticking point could be communication. The former England boss does not speak a word of German and will have to master it fast. At McClaren's first Wolfsburg press conference, club general manager Dieter Hoeness put much emphasis on the new coach's "strong personality". But it will not be force of character which determines whether the Yorkshireman stands or falls at the VW club. It was his methodical and inventive work on the training ground and tactical flexibility which turned Twente into winners, and there is no reason why the same formula cannot work across the border in Germany.

"I'm told that Wolfsburg were fantastic on the counter-attack when they became champions, but that they struggled last year when they tried a more open style," continues McClaren. "Myself, I'm looking for a balance between the two; both to defend seriously and make things happen creatively. What matters is that we play organised and effective football.

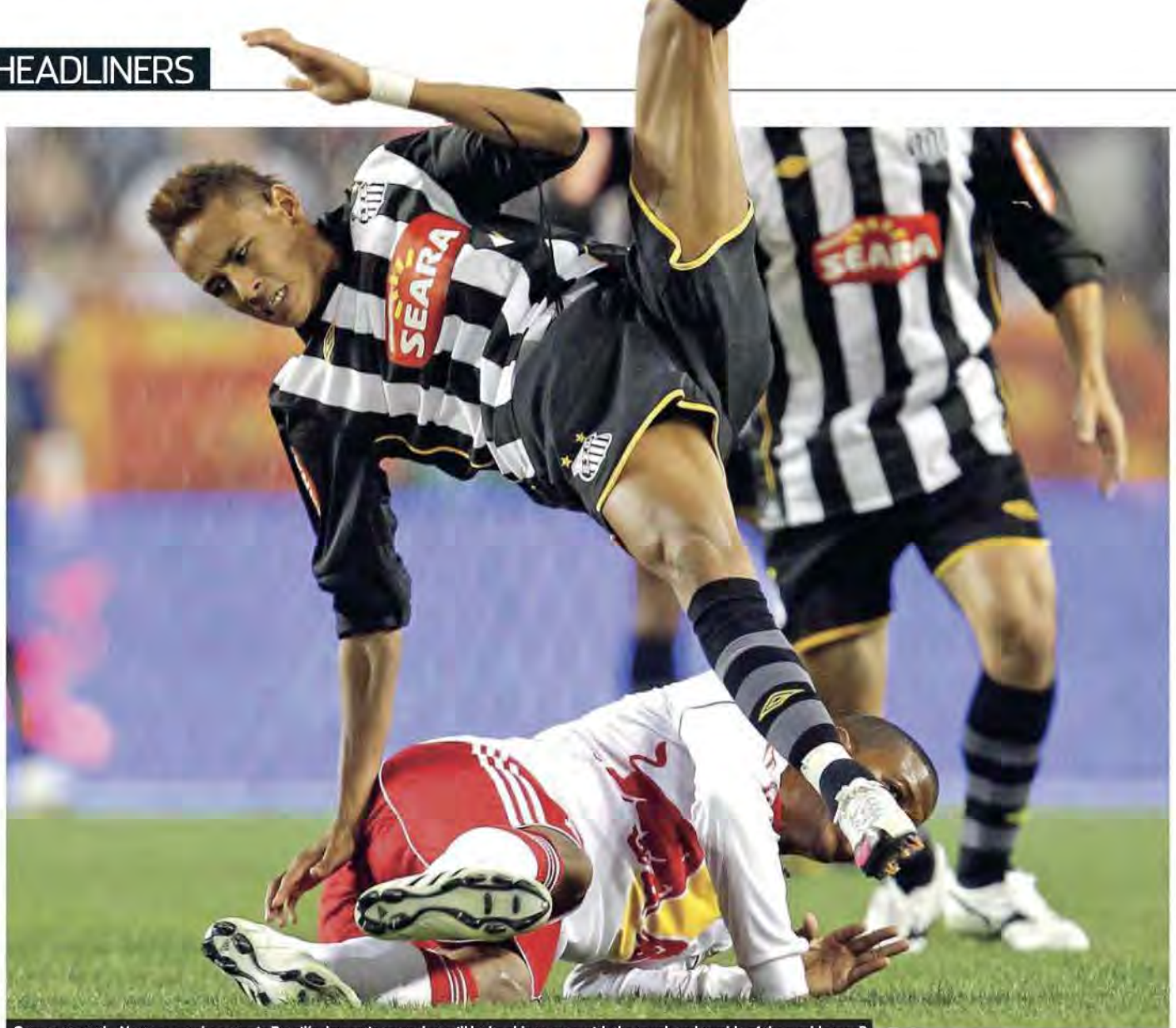
"In my book that's the way to achieve the right results. I think football in England and Germany has a lot of common ground. In both countries the game is played at a high tempo and you have to be organised and disciplined."

While it's true to say he was not Wolfsburg's first choice – that was former France and Liverpool boss Gerard Houllier, who initially seemed keen but then backed off for personal reasons – his Bundesliga employers seem genuinely delighted with the appointment.

"Steve McClaren has clear ideas about his football and a great deal of international experience," opines Hoeness. "What's more he fits well with us. He's open, direct and will bring some humour to the job."

Nick Bidwell

I'm in the driving seat...McClaren is relishing his chance with the former German champions



Over protected...Neymar may be a star in Brazil's domestic game, but will he be able to cope with the rough and tumble of the world stage?

Neymar
Brazil's big hope must step up his game

BRAZIL

THERE WERE FEW howls of anguish from the Brazilian press when Ronaldinho was excluded from the country's World Cup squad. After arguing in his favour earlier in the year, the media had largely given up the cause.

Meanwhile, Alexandre Pato's omission was too predictable to start a rumpus.

Instead, the big talking point was the omission of Santos pair, 20-year-old attacking midfielder Paulo Henrique Ganso (see Talent Scout, page 70) and 18-year-old striker Neymar.

The great and the good of the Brazilian game had been enlisted in the pro-Neymar campaign, but to no avail. Unlike Ganso, the youngster was not even placed on standby. Embittered by the fact that almost all the star names play their club football in Europe, some of the more nationalistic elements of the Brazilian press were angered by the exclusion of a home-based prodigy – so much so that their arguments lost all coherence.

In the post-announcement press conference, one leading journalist criticised coach Dunga by comparing him to Cesar Luis Menotti, the Argentina boss who omitted the 17-year-old Diego Maradona from their 1978 World Cup squad. It was a comparison Dunga was happy to accept – as Argentina won the tournament.

There is no doubting Neymar's potential. Emerson Leao, who launched the Santos career of Robinho, argues convincingly that Neymar is better than Robinho was at the same age, saying: "Robinho took a long time to learn to look for the goal. He preferred to do tricks. Neymar was much quicker to learn to be direct."

The latest jewel from the Santos production line has good vision, wonderful balance and a priceless ability to keep calm in front of goal. If he can cope with all the hype around him then a glittering career is his for the taking.

But for all the raving of the local media, there must be serious doubts about his ability to shine in a senior World Cup at this stage.

For one thing he is currently protected by Brazilian referees who punish the merest physical contact by a defender. Yet even in domestic football, Neymar is attracting a reputation for going to ground too easily.

Certainly, he felt the step up last year in an event conveniently forgotten by the lobby in his favour. He was an unconvincing member of a Brazil Under-17 side which, despite huge hopes, were unbelievably one of the eight teams eliminated in the group phase of the world championship finals staged in Nigeria.

He scored a fine individual goal in the opener against Japan, but against Mexico and Switzerland he was substituted after making little impression with Brazil 1-0 down and needing a goal.

This should be enough to undermine the comparison with Pele that the pro-Neymar lobby were making. A year before the 17-year-old Pele enchanted the world in Sweden in 1958 he was earning rave reviews for his performance for the senior Brazil side against Argentina. Nine months before South Africa 2010, Neymar was an Under-17 disappointment.

Tim Vickery

David Villa

Barcelona buy Spain striker – then step up pursuit of midfielder Cesc Fabregas

SPAIN

IN PAYING Valencia £34million for their striker David Villa, Barcelona were responsible for the most significant transfer deal of the pre-World Cup period.

Despite reports linking him with a move to England, Villa – who scored 107 league goals in 166 games for Valencia – had always indicated his preference for staying in Spain.

Valencia's financial predicament has improved over the past year, thanks to restructuring deals, but they remain heavily in debt with the plan to move to their "new Mestalla" stadium on hold. The transfer fee for the 28-year-old will help cover the club's deficit for the next year, though whether they can hold on to their other Spain internationals, David Silva and Juan Mata, remains to be seen.

Barca moved quickly to tie up the deal ahead of Villa's departure for the World Cup but it is unlikely to be their last piece of business this summer.

Arsenal gave a blunt two fingers to Barcelona's initial bid for Villa's international team-mate Cesc Fabregas, but the Spanish champions are expected to return with an improved offer.

John Holmesdale

Nou start...Villa joined Barcelona from Valencia before the start of the World Cup finals

Keir Radnedge

Jordaan's destiny

Future is bright for South Africa's Mr Fixit

WHEN ARCHBISHOP Desmond Tutu took centre stage at the celebratory concert in Orlando Stadium on the eve of the World Cup finals and hailed the "man who made it all possible" he could have meant one of three.

Nelson Mandela was the one he did mean, for many reasons beyond the mere football sphere, but he might have meant Sepp Blatter for seeing through the pioneering African dream, even after the dramatic defeat in the vote for 2006.

Or he might have meant Danny Jordaan, who had caught the dream himself in 1994 while attending FIFA Congress in Chicago on the eve of the finals and has worked tirelessly ever since to put Mandela and Blatter's vision into practice.

Jordaan's destiny beyond this summer is unknown. He says he wants a rest after 16 years criss-crossing the world in the service of his country, his love of football (he is a Tottenham fan) and the grandest mixture of both. My suspicion is that, once his batteries are recharged, he will be heading back: two seats fall vacant on the African confederation executive next year and, one assumes, Issa Hayatou will not continue as president much further himself after having seen a mission of his own fulfilled.

Jordaan has told me how South Africans had been fired up by international scepticism about their abilities to stage the event – especially cynical taunts from England.

"The World Cup kick-off ranks with Mandela's release from prison and the post-apartheid elections"

During the vain bidding process for 2006, the late former British sports minister Tony Banks told him that anyone rating South Africa a better World Cup host than bid rivals England "must believe Elvis Presley is still alive and living on the moon".

A veteran anti-apartheid campaigner and former MP, Jordaan now believes that the World Cup kick-off will go down alongside those other historic dates of February 1990, when Nelson Mandela walked free from the Victor Verster prison, and the staging of South Africa's first post-apartheid elections in April 1994.

Jordaan says: "Madiba's release was celebrated because he was one of the world's greatest icons. The election was dubbed a miracle of the Rainbow Nation. Now this will be another spectacular moment."

Concerns abroad

World Cup preparations were enshrouded, abroad at least, by concerns over crime and security, transportation shortcomings and the Soccer City soap opera.

The run-up to kick-off were also marred by a stadium stampede during an international friendly between Nigeria and North Korea, various media-group robberies and the death of Mandela's granddaughter after the Opening Concert.

Investment of more than £4billion has helped ensure that all the venues were ready and, architecturally, among the most distinctive in World Cup history. Other infrastructure delivered more or less on time include widened highways, a new airport at Durban and another air terminal at Johannesburg, plus the high-speed Gautrain link from Jo'burg airport to Sandton.

Further in the country and the continent, indirect "bonuses" see Cape Town hosting a three-day economic summit midway through the tournament, while Durban, with an eye on an Olympic bid, will host an IOC Session next year.

Jordaan is pleased that at last visitors and viewers would be impressed by the stadia and other infrastructure and "begin to understand what we talked about wasn't just talk".

He says: "It's a symbol of our determination to present the best World Cup ever, an image makeover for the country and the continent.

"It's a psychological barrier that's been crossed; a historical moment." ●

Leading the way...Jordaan (left) and Mandela

Read more from Keir Radnedge at worldsoccer.com

Australia's blunder on 2018

Meet and greet...Beckham (right) with Bin Hammam

BIDDING POLITICS rumbled on in the background during FIFA Congress in Sandton near Johannesburg on the eve of the finals. All 11 countries represented in the bids for 2018 and 2022 had their people there talking, wining and dining, and studying every nod and nuance.

And the sense of the enduring uncertainty of the process and the voting among the FIFA executive on December 2 was sharpened by the unravelling of the 2016 European Championship process.

The French considered themselves poised for a landslide win over Turkey and Italy. In the end, however, they sneaked home by only one vote (seven to six) over the fast-finishing Turks in the second ballot, with Italy having been buried in the first.

Big losers in Sandton were the Australians, who were forced into pulling out of the 2018 race to focus solely on 2022 after having the rug pulled out from under their twin-track approach by the Asian confederation.

Mohamed Bin Hammam, president of the AFC, sparked the climbdown by announcing that the confederation would support Europe for 2018. Japan, Qatar and South Korea had already decided to pursue only 2022 and the announcement left the Australians high and dry.

Hasty talks followed which ended with a joint statement being issued by the Football Federation Australia (FFA) and FIFA; the Australians were not even granted the diplomatic sop of being able to make the announcement independently. The statement read: "FFA will focus its bidding campaign on 2022. The decision, which was co-ordinated with European executive committee members, has been welcomed by FIFA, whose secretary-general Jerome Valcke said: 'The FFA and my office as well as the FIFA president [Sepp Blatter] have been in constant dialogue about Australia's bidding intentions since last autumn.

The decision [by Australia not to bid for 2018] will delight the USA, whose bargaining power has improved significantly

"The FFA have displayed an exemplary level of solidarity with Europe and the European bidding nations and were among the very first to enter into an open and constructive dialogue with me after it became apparent that there was a growing movement to stage the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Europe.

"Their announcement of today, therefore, to henceforth focus solely on bidding for the 2022 FIFA World Cup is a welcome gesture that is much appreciated by FIFA's leadership and executive committee. We wish to thank [FFA chairman] Mr [Frank] Lowy, the FFA and the Australian Government."

Trusting relationship

Lowy himself confirmed: "We have been in discussion with FIFA for months and it is that trusting relationship with the leadership of the governing body that has caused us to focus on 2022 and decide to leave the field for 2018 to European contenders.

"The FFA's decision was in planning since October 2009 and its leadership, after careful consideration and analysis, has now decided to focus its bidding on 2022."

The decision will delight the USA, which remains the only non-European bidder claiming pursuit of both 2018 and 2022. Their bid bargaining power has been significantly improved.

England also emerged encouraged from the Congress door-stepping. The Triesman affair was an unhappy episode but was dealt with swiftly by his replacement, Geoff Thompson, who probably should have been there in the first place. Certainly it was only to England's credit when he was given the floor in Congress to expound on FIFA's new computerised international transfer system.

England's delegation included David Beckham and former South African captain Lucas Radebe; intriguingly, the Russian delegation, led by the country's deputy first minister Igor Shuvalov, also featured Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich.

Finally, if Australia's decision had been pending since last October, why did they present a 2018/2022 bid book to FIFA less than a month before the retreat from Jo'burg?

Blatter goes on...and on...

Another term...Blatter will stand again next year

SEPP BLATTER has no intention of stepping aside just yet. His mission to establish football as a worldwide force for health and education is unfinished, he says. It is a very long job indeed which could keep him busy for decades.

Blatter told FIFA Congress that he intends to stand again next year for a fourth term. His words were greeted by a spontaneous burst of applause – following a brief hiatus while the delegates' simultaneous translation caught up.

Delegates were in a generous mood. By happy coincidence, Blatter had earlier announced that the finances – turnover of more than $1billion last year for the first time – allowed the grant of one-off bonuses of $250,000 to all of FIFA's 208 national associations and of $50million to each of the six regional confederations.

In return, do not expect Blatter to change his mind on video technology; he remains as determined as ever to ensure that football remains "as a game of the people with a human face".

The law-making International Board has approved a worldwide extension of the extra-assistants experiment which ran in the Europa League and pushed technology experiments into the shadows.

Blatter, making a congress address detour from his main theme of unity through worldwide development, said: "We want to keep football as a game of the people with a human face, so we don't want technology on the field of play because we want to maintain the spontaneity of football – played, administered and controlled by human beings.

"Human beings, from time to time, make efforts and, while in football, as in life, perfection does not exist, our game is good."

WORLD CUP QUESTIONS

Celebration...the pre-tournament tour

- *Bafana Bafana* went on an open-top bus tour of Johannesburg before the finals began. Just in case results meant they would not have the opportunity later?

- All the top goalkeepers queued up ahead of the finals to criticise the Jabulani ball. Getting their excuses in first?

- FIFA congress opened with the question "Italy won the World Cup in 2006 so are Italy the defending world champions?" so delegates could test the electronic voting system. Some 191 voted yes, seven voted no and eight, presumably, could not find either button. More homework needed?

FIFA's gamble with the game's credibility

SIX plus five has been kicked into the long grass. FIFA has conceded that it will not win its battle with the European Commission over nationality restrictions. Other sports have come up against the same problem and have had to retreat from the Brussels brick wall.

As Sepp Blatter said: "Probably Europe has more problems with which to concern itself at the moment than sport."

UEFA's more subtle strategy through the manipulation of home-grown quotas has thus prevailed. Michel Platini kept a straight face.

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SOUTH AFRICA 2010 FIFA WORLD CUP

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NUMBERS The final rankings in the 2009-10 ESM Golden Shoe

36 leading Euro

1 Lionel Messi
(Barcelona, Spa)
34 league goals = 68 points

2= Didier Drogba
(Chelsea, Eng)
29 league goals = 58 pts

2= Antonio Di Natale
(Udinese, Ita)
29 league goals = 58 pts

4 Gonzalo Higuain
(Real Madrid, Spa)
27 league goals = 54 pts

5 Luis Suarez
(Ajax, Hol)
35 league goals = 52.5 pts

11= Edin Dzeko
(Wolfsburg, Ger)
22 league goals = 44 pts

11= Frank Lampard
(Chelsea, Eng)
22 league goals = 44 pts

11= Diego Milito
(Internazionale, Ita)
22 league goals = 44 pts

14= David Villa
(Valencia, Spa)
21 league goals = 42 pts

14= Stefan Kiessling
(Bayer Leverkusen, Ger)
21 league goals = 42 pts

21 Radamel Falcao
(Porto, Por)
25 league goals = 37.5 pts

22= Diego Forlan
(Atletico Madrid, Spa)
18 league goals = 36 pts

22= Jermain Defoe
(Tottenham Hotspur, Eng)
18 league goals = 36 pts

22= Fernando Torres
(Liverpool, Eng)
18 league goals = 36 pts

22= Kevin Kuranyi
(Schalke, Ger)
18 league goals = 36 pts

31= Itay Shechter
(Hapoel Tel Aviv, Isr)
22 league goals = 33 pts

31= Jose Semedo
(APOP, Cyp)
22 league goals = 33 pts

31= Joeano
(Ermis, Cyp)
22 league goals = 33 pts

34= Zlatan Ibrahimovic
(Barcelona, Spa)
16 league goals = 32 pts

34= Claudio Pizarro
(Werder Bremen, Ger)
16 league goals = 32 pts

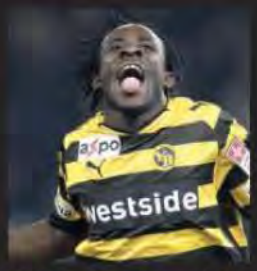
pean goalscorers

6= Wayne Rooney
(Manchester United, Eng)
26 league goals = 52 pts

6= Cristiano Ronaldo
(Real Madrid, Spa)
26 league goals = 52 pts

8 Darren Bent
(Sunderland, Eng)
24 league goals = 48 pts

9 Carlos Tevez
(Manchester City, Eng)
23 league goals = 46 pts



10 Seydou Doumbia
(Young Boys, Swi)
30 league goals = 45 pts

14= Shlomi Arbeitman
(Maccabi Haifa, Isr)
28 league goals = 42 pts

17 Oscar Cardozo
(Benfica, Por)
26 league goals = 39 pts

18= Lucas Barrios
(Borussia Dortmund, Ger)
19 league goals = 38 pts

18= Fabrizio Miccoli
(Palermo, Ita)
19 league goals = 38 pts

18= Giampaolo Pazzini
(Sampdoria, Ita)
19 league goals = 38 pts

22= Mamadou Niang
(Marseille, Fra)
18 league goals = 36 pts

22= Bryan Ruiz
(Twente, Hol)
24 league goals = 36 pts

28= Kris Boyd
(Rangers, Sco)
23 league goals = 34.5 pts

28= Djibril Cisse
(Panathinaikos, Gre)
23 league goals = 34.5 pts

30 Kevin Gameiro
(Lorient, Fra)
17 league goals = 34 pts

34= Arjen Robben
(Bayern Munich, Ger)
16 league goals = 32 pts

* Goals scored by players in England, France, Germany, Italy and Spain are multiplied by a factor of 2

** Goals by players in Cyprus, Greece, Holland, Israel, Portugal, Scotland and Switzerland are multiplied by a factor of 1.5

DISPATCHES

Exclusive reports from our worldwide network of correspondents

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The greatest show on earth

World Cup kicks off with a credible draw for the hosts against Mexico

Party time...Tshabalala (no8) and team-mates celebrate his opening goal against Mexico

"AFRICA IS INDEED happy; this is the African World Cup. The time for Africa has come. *Ke Nako!*" With those words – "We are ready!" – South African President Jacob Zuma opened the 2010 World Cup and talked up a significant page of sporting history.

His own national team and unintimidated Mexico then produced one of the better opening games in World Cup history with a 1-1 draw which meant honours even and a happy day for everyone in Soccer City.

Hard to believe that two decades ago South Africa was a pariah country. Now the world's focus centred on the Rainbow Nation for all the right reasons after so many wrong ones. The World Cup has taken root on African soil – which surely means that, within little more than a decade, perhaps the Olympic Games may follow.

Nelson Mandela, Sepp Blatter, Danny Jordaan and a host of believers had the vision, ever since 1994. Now, to some relief, the time for talk, for claim and counter-claim, for excessive pessimism and over-the-top optimism, has ended. The African World Cup is a reality and the opening match produced worthy goals.

> "South Africa and Mexico produced one of the better opening games"

For most of the last year South Africa's citizens have adopted the custom of heading off to work on Fridays in the national team shirt or, at the least, their own club. This was a Football Friday to embrace

the world, to the accompaniment of the omnipresent vuvuzelas.

When complaints about the angry sound of hornets' nests were registered by some of the players and coaches at the Confederations Cup last year, Blatter retorted that every country had its football/music tradition and the vuvuzela was nothing more than a local equivalent of Swiss fans' cow bells. As Winston Churchill might have said: "Some cows! Some bells!".

Another issue was whether the vuvuzela fell into the category of potentially dangerous weapons, as have umbrellas which are banned from the World Cup stadia. Organising chief Danny Jordaan had even mused: "They will only be at Bafana Bafana matches, anyway."

But no. The vuvu-fashion is sweeping the game. Even London mayor Boris Johnson sounded a note, apparently, in marking the World Cup's opening day of action; so expect to hear them at some stadium near you next season.

If nothing else, the vuvuzelas also created a counter-industry; enterprising street vendors were soon patrolling the gridlocked traffic lanes heading for Soccer City with placards proclaiming: "Earplugs for R15 [£1.50]".

"A dream has come true. The spirit of Africa is in Soccer City"

Sepp Blatter

Ripped to shreds

Mexico boss Javier Aguirre could not afford to be distracted by such issues. After his Wembley warm-up against England, Aguirre had declared that this Soccer City date was the most important match he had ever coached. Yet it was the hosts who made the more nervy start and Giovani Dos Santos and Carlos Vela ripped the left flank of their defence to shreds.

Only the alertness of their goalkeeper, Itu Khune, and a little bit of luck saved South Africa from slipping behind. But the half-time break gave them a chance to understand that they had not been outclassed or outplayed.

Suitably fortified they upped the pace after the interval and went ahead through a magnificent strike from Siphiwe Tshabalala.

This is a player who spends much of his off-pitch time searching great free-kick goals on YouTube. Now he has provided a collector's piece himself with the magisterial fashion in which he converted what may also be one of the passes of the finals from Kagisho Dikgacoi. Hence Tshabalala: first South African hero of their own World Cup.

One of the factors which separates the managerial men from the coaching children is the sagacity with which they use their substitutes. In Aguirre, Mexico have a man of the first category, in the manner of Jose Mourinho at club level.

Aguirre threw on all his permitted three substitutes in pursuit of an equaliser and was properly rewarded when Andres Guardado provided the angled cross which was coolly converted from close range by Rafa Marquez. A captain's goal indeed...for an appropriately diplomatic result.

As FIFA president Sepp Blatter had said before kick-off: "Congratulations to the African population, congratulations to South Africa. A dream has come true. The spirit of Africa is in Soccer City." ●

Spectacle...the opening ceremony at Soccer City

The sound of 2010...the omnipresent vuvuzela

Under pressure...Mexico's Guillermo Franco (no9) wins a header

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Streets ahead

Barcelona retained their Liga title as runners-up Real Madrid finished a staggering 25 points in front of the team in third

FLORENTINO PEREZ once claimed that if Barcelona did not exist Real Madrid would have to invent them. As the 2009-10 season drew to a close, Barca coach Pep Guardiola had to agree: if Real Madrid did not exist, Barcelona would have to invent them too.

A campaign that was set to be all about the Champions League had little choice but to reinvent itself as a dramatic domestic dispute that defined the greatest of footballing rivalries. In doing so it reinforced the sense that, in a curious sort of way, Barcelona and Madrid need each other. The fearful conclusion for the rest of the Spanish league might be that they don't need anyone else.

Barcelona and Madrid are like niggling, competitive neighbours, forever winding each other up, outdoing each other, pushing each other on. As Barca midfielder Xavi put it, Madrid and Barcelona are like two sides of the scales: they can't both be up at the same time and, by definition, one being up means the other being down. Their destinies are inextricably entwined.

Barcelona provide the best measure of Madrid's success; Madrid the most exact gauge of Barcelona's. The Catalan intellectual Manuel Vazquez Montalban insisted that "Barca need a strong Madrid to properly judge their own successes", while even victory in the 2003 championship left Madrid captain Raul admitting: "The rivalry lost a bit of edge, a touch of magic, with Barca struggling so badly."

The antagonism obliges them to be stronger, driving them on. Like all truly great rivalries – think Coe and Ovett, McEnroe and Borg, Kasparov and Karpov – the success of one propels the other and it was no coincidence that Madrid's biggest-ever financial outlay on players followed Barcelona's best-ever season, a unique treble won in Guardiola's first season in charge. Nor is it coincidence that this season finished as it did, that Real Madrid's greatest-ever season was also Barca's greatest – statistically, at least.

The question is whether they alone are the cause or whether the rest of La Liga are too; whether social and, above all, financial imbalances are in danger of turning Spain into a two-horse race, a competition that Sevilla's sporting director already admits "reminds me of Scotland".

The question being asked is was it just too easy for Madrid and Barcelona to win games? Was it too easy for them to hammer teams? After all, Tenerife, Valladolid and Xerez went down, while Malaga stayed up with 37 points – the lowest total by a surviving team since three points for a win was adopted. Sevilla in fourth were closer in points to the bottom than the top.

On the final day, Rafael Van der Vaart's goal at Malaga was Madrid's 102nd of the season – just five short of the all-time record in La Liga. Gonzalo Higuain had scored 27, Cristiano Ronaldo 26, and Madrid finished with a league-record 31 victories that put them a massive 25 points clear of their nearest challenger.

Carrying the can

And yet Real Madrid still didn't win the league. Perez had returned to the presidency last summer and, for his fourth successive season in charge, he ended the campaign empty-handed. Not for the first time the man carrying the can will be the coach; Manuel Pellegrini going the same way as Vicente Del Bosque, Carlos Queiroz, Jose Antonio Camacho, Mariano Garcia Remon, Vanderlei Luxemburgo and Ramon Lopez Caro.

Instead, it was Barcelona who won their 20th league title. That's still some way behind Madrid's total of 31, but the trend is a worrying one for their rivals: Barcelona have won three of the last five (to Madrid's two) and 10 since 1990, to Madrid's six. As so often though, the significance of it owed something to Madrid.

Leading the way...La Liga's top scorer, Messi

> **"Madrid have been fantastic opponents and without them we would never have reached 99 points"**
> *Barcelona coach Pep Guardiola*

Madrid pushed Barcelona to the line, breathing down their necks all the way down the home straight, matching them stride for stride, forcing a breathless pace. Not including the *clasico*, Madrid and Barcelona went into the final day having between them won 27 and drawn three of their last 30 matches.

What Madrid had succeeded in doing was making an even greater virtue of Barcelona's title-winning season, obliging them to reach the finish line with records smashed. Guardiola did not even wait for any questions in the aftermath of winning the title. As fireworks went off outside, and fans poured down the Ramblas, he said: "I would like to congratulate Madrid. There's great admiration for them here. They have been fantastic opponents and without them we would never have reached 99 points."

During the title run-in, after Barcelona had regained top spot with a 2-0 win in Madrid, both sides had been walking a tightrope. Each knew the other was so good that they could barely afford to drop a point.

After Barcelona drew 0-0 with local

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Champions...Barcelona fans celebrate in the streets

Devastating...Real Madrid go a goal behind to Barcelona at the Bernabeu in April

rivals Espanyol they led the table by just one point. Now it wasn't even a case of Barca losing as a draw would see the title change hands. In the Spanish capital they said it was the game that gave Madrid the chance of winning the league; it was, countered Guardiola later, the game that allowed Barcelona to do so. They had five games left and had to win them all.

Madrid fans clung to the hope that Barcelona would slip up in Villarreal or Seville, two of the toughest away trips you could face. After all, Madrid had lost in Seville, while Villarreal were the only side to have taken a point from the Camp Nou.

Instead, Barcelona scored seven times, hammering Villarreal 4-1 and beating Sevilla 3-2. If the Sevilla result looked close, it wasn't. Barcelona could have been six or seven up and almost paid for a moment's wobble in which they conceded two in as many minutes. "I prefer to judge the game as a whole than on those five minutes," insisted Guardiola. "We responded brilliantly and played very well."

They had to. With Madrid bearing down on them, refusing to go away, refusing to die, there was no choice but to keep on winning right up to the final day. Again, there was some hope for Madrid fans to cling to. Again, it proved fleeting.

Barcelona's opponents were Valladolid, who were desperately fighting against relegation and a side, Madrid fans hoped, that would go to Camp Nou and park the bus – just like Internazionale had done in their Champions League semi-final.

But it didn't happen. On the final day, Barca hammered Valladolid 4-0, smoothly dispatching their visitors, utterly superior. It was the 12th time they had scored four or more and they had only been beaten once all season – in their now traditional reverse against Atletico Madrid – and only been behind once, in that same game.

New La Liga records

Like Madrid, Barcelona also racked up 31 wins and they had defeated their rivals twice. Victor Valdes won the Zamora award as statistically the best goalkeeper in the top flight, while Leo Messi scored 34 goals to equal the record set by Brazil's Ronaldo in 1996-97. They finished with 99 points and a goal difference of plus 74, which were both new La Liga records.

Given how good their season had been, the only anomaly was that Barcelona had only won one trophy and had lost just four times in all competitions – compare that to the 24 defeats suffered by Europa League winners Atletico Madrid, who picked up the same number of trophies.

As the team celebrated winning the title, Guardiola took the microphone and apologised to the fans for not reaching the Champions League Final at the Santiago Bernabeu. And the comment was telling.

Because of its location, this season had been all about the Champions League – for both clubs.

Madrid had departed in the first knockout phase for the sixth successive season and Barcelona had been knocked out by Inter in the semi-finals, finally cementing Madrid's interest in Jose Mourinho.

In the aftermath of Madrid's defeat the league was repackaged as the objective, while disappointment at losing to Inter and failing to reach the Champions League Final at the home of their great rivals would never be fully extinguished by Barcelona.

But, by pushing each other all the way, by fighting to the death and by doing justice to their rivalry, Madrid and Barcelona ensured that for all its secondary status the domestic campaign was anything but a sham.

Madrid and Barcelona needed each other to make the sideshow the main event and they succeeded. The 2009-10 La Liga started off as an afterthought but ended up being historic. Especially for Barcelona. ●

Impressive...Manzano

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
LIONEL MESSI (Barcelona)
In a season that was set up as Ronaldo versus Messi, there was only one winner – despite the fact that Ronaldo was superb. With 34 league goals, nine assists and stunning performance after stunning performance, his brilliance was barely believable.

COACH OF THE SEASON
GREGORIO MANZANO (Mallorca)
Racked by debt and with their best players having departed, Mallorca should have been candidates for relegation. Instead, thanks to the tactical astuteness and the psychological work of their coach, they were 45 seconds away from clinching a Champions League place.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
PEDRO (Barcelona)
There were glimpses last season that he might be quite good – but no one imagined he would be this good. Scored in every competition in 2009, scored against Real Madrid at the Bernabeu and ended the campaign with 23 goals.

Old and new

The 2010 Libertadores Cup Final will feature a Brazilian club and a debutant from either Chile or Mexico

Down and out...Estudiantes defenders look on in horror as Internacional's Guiliano scores to knock them out of the Libertadores

BRAZIL

TIM VICKERY in Rio de Janeiro

FOR THE SIXTH consecutive year there is the certainty of a Brazilian club in the Final of the Libertadores Cup with – in a replay of the 2006 decider – Internacional and Sao Paulo meeting in the semi-finals when the competition resumes after the World Cup.

Sao Paulo will have the most reason to regret the 10-week pause in the action as their defence, so vulnerable at the end of last year's domestic championship, has been back to its mean best with eight consecutive clean sheets. But after labouring past Peru's Universitario in the first knockout round (on penalties after two goalless draws) the addition of one player made a huge difference as they saw off compatriots Cruzeiro 4-0 on aggregate in the quarter-finals.

Veteran centre-forward Fernandao slotted in straight away, with speed merchants Dagoberto and Marlos buzzing around him and Hernanes rediscovering his form in his natural central midfield position. Sao Paulo did have some luck as Cruzeiro had a goal harshly disallowed, a shot that hit both posts and, in the second leg, suffered the self-destruction of talented but hot-tempered striker Kleber being sent off after one minute. In-form Cruzeiro had been clear favourites, but Sao Paulo were efficient and impressive in both legs.

Internacional have had more of a struggle, with Uruguayan coach Jorge Fossati under constant pressure and eventually being replaced despite guiding the club to the last four. They have yet to win away, nevertheless it was away goals that got them through two consecutive knockout rounds against Argentinian opposition. The second leg of their game against Banfield was comfortable enough, but against defending champions Estudiantes in the quarter-finals it was anything but with the Brazilians saving themselves with two minutes to go.

Last year's hero, coach Alejandro Sabella, must take some of the blame for Estudiantes' demise. A defensive line-up in the first leg gave them possession but no penetration. An extra striker at home, Leandro Gonzalez, seemed to make all the difference. But, 2-1 up on aggregate, he was withdrawn at half-time and the team sat back – and Guiliano found a gap in their backline to score a decisive goal.

Flying...Universidad

> "Last year's hero, coach Alejandro Sabella, must take some of the blame for champions Estudiantes' demise"

Unwise changes

A debutant finalist will emerge from the other clash, with both Universidad de Chile and Mexico's Guadalajara benefiting from meeting opponents who made unwise coaching changes.

The Chileans are a compact side who break well and are particularly effective away from home, as they showed against Flamengo of Brazil.

Reigning domestic champions, Flamengo had surprisingly replaced Andrade with Rogerio Lourenco. Part of Andrade's success last year was the switch to a back four, but Lourenco played defensive midfielder Romulo as a third centre-back and a defence which had been suspect was now porous.

The strength of character which saw the team turn a potential massacre against Ronaldo's Corinthians into an away-goals win disappeared in the quarter-finals against the Chileans as they produced an appalling defensive display and were lucky to lose the home leg only 3-2. Inspired by Adriano they won 2-1 in Santiago – the first defeat their opponents had suffered in the competition – but a superb chip from Walter Montillo was enough to take the U into the last four.

Under Javier Torrente, Libertad of Paraguay had played some of the most interesting football in the competition, with a bold 3-4-3 formation and exciting performances from young strikers Rodolfo Gamarra and Pablo Velazquez, and wing-back Victor Ayala. But Torrente was bafflingly replaced by Gregorio Perez, the system changed to 4-4-2 and the youngsters suffered a collective loss of form. After scraping past Colombia's Once Caldas, Libertad went down 3-0 away to Guadalajara, and even a return to Torrente's formation was not quite enough to save them.

Just as in the previous round against Argentina's Velez Sarsfield, Guadalajara won 3-0 at home and clung on for dear life away to restrict their opponents to a 2-0 scoreline. In Mexico the front partnership has looked highly effective, with Omar Bravo sharp and Omar Arellano full of thrust. The Mexicans will surely be even stronger when the action resumes as five of their players were with the national team preparing for the World Cup. ●

Inter, Inter, Inter all the way

The "Special One" makes it a season to remember

ITALY

PADDY AGNEW in Rome

IN THE END, the club that has dominated the post-Calciopoli era of Italian football wrote a new chapter in its long and not always glorious history by pulling off an Italian Cup, league and Champions League treble that Internazionale fans are likely to treasure for a long time.

And one man, more than any other, tended to dominate the club's *annus mirabilis*: coach Jose Mourinho, of course. Even those who do not greatly care for the Portuguese maestro – and there are many – would have to admit that this was probably the most consummate masterpiece yet worked by the "Special One".

In the space of two seasons, he came, he saw and he conquered.

Many would argue that it is not hard to conquer when you move from the court (and bank account) of a man like Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich to someone like petrol millionaire Massimo Moratti; men whose passion for their clubs saw Mourinho granted grandiose budgets. But while this is clearly true, money, as we all know well, does not guarantee success.

In just two seasons, Mourinho, building on an admittedly very solid foundation left behind by his predecessor Roberto Mancini, managed to improve Inter physically, tactically and, above all, mentally.

Watching Inter win the first leg of the treble, beating Roma 1-0 in their own Olympic Stadium backyard to win the Italian Cup on May 5, it was clear to all observers that Mourinho and his staff had timed Inter's season to perfection. At the end of a long, tough league campaign, his side looked not only sharp, mean and hungry but also terrifyingly determined.

Inter's hold and dominance of the game was such that it provoked a moment of unforgiveable frustration from Roma talisman Francesco Totti. Late in the game, the visibly enraged Totti chased after Mario Balotelli before lashing out with a vicious kick at the Inter striker, knocking him to the ground and getting himself sent off in the process.

Totti later claimed that Balotelli had insulted him, calling him "grandad", thus touching on the raw nerve point of an ageing champion. That may be so, but what was obvious was that Totti's kick expressed a sense of total frustration in the face of an Inter side that, for all Roma's best efforts, was quite simply stronger in all aspects of the game.

Make ours a treble...Mourinho (left) and Moratti

Totti's frustration was all the more understandable because, like a lot of Roma fans, he had probably begun to think that their great fight with Inter for the Serie A title would, in the end, come to nothing. It was a classic case of so near and yet so far for poor old Roma who made Inter fight all the way.

Unlike last season, when Inter had their 17th Italian title all wrapped up

Champion moves...Inter players put on their dancing shoes after securing the Serie A title at Siena

by the third-last game of the season, the contest went right down to the wire with Inter coming into their final match, away to Siena, with a two-point lead over Roma.

In theory, had Inter drawn with Siena, and Roma won their final game away to Chievo, then both would have been tied on 80 points.

In a past era this would have led to a title play-off, but in these times of overcrowded fixture lists, the Italian Federation had opted for the head-to-head count – which favoured Roma since they had held Inter to a 1-1 draw in Milan last November and then beaten them 2-1 at home in March. Thus it was "all or bust" for Inter on their final day.

> **"Mourinho improved Inter physically, tactically and mentally"**

And for half an hour at least Roma were the "virtual" new champions. At half-time in the two key matches, they were leading 2-0 against Chievo while Inter were being held 0-0 by already-relegated Siena.

That half-time scoreline was all the more frustrating for Inter because for the first 45 minutes they dominated possession, creating four clear chances and also hitting the crossbar through Balotelli. On top that, Siena goalkeeper Gianluca Curci – a former Roma player – looked as if he intended to do his old team-mates a major favour as he made a number of excellent saves.

In the second half, however, Inter showed the sort of composure and determination which has set them apart all season, keeping both their concentration and cool before Argentina striker Diego Milito scored

their all-important goal in the 57th minute. Fittingly, it was the handiwork of two players who proved outstanding all season long: Milito scoring his 22nd league goal after being set up by a terrific run from captain Javier Zanetti.

Inter therefore finished the season two points clear of Roma and, in all probability, the close-run nature of the Serie A title contest owed as much to Inter's Champions League campaign as to the remarkable Roma revival. As Inter battled with Chelsea, CSKA Moscow and Barcelona, they took their eye off the Serie A ball, losing twice and dropping 14 points in a miserable eight-match run between February and March.

In the meantime, Roma, under ex-Chelsea manager Claudio Ranieri, hit a terrific run of form, going 24 matches unbeaten to not only wipe out a 14-point deficit with Inter but to actually overtake them to lead Serie A for two heady weeks. The Roma run came to a painful stop on the fourth-last weekend of the season when they were beaten 2-1 in Rome by Sampdoria, thus letting the revived Inter back in front.

Unstoppable Inter

With two legs of the treble in the bank, Inter looked frankly unstoppable as they headed for the third leg of a remarkable treble and the conquest of a trophy that had been missing from the sideboard for 45 years.

In the wake of their 2-0 victory over Bayern Munich in the Champions League Final, nothing could upset Moratti; not even the fact that, as we had all been anticipating, Mourinho moved to Real Madrid almost within seconds of the final whistle at the Bernabeu.

Not even the subsequent wrangling over Mourinho's multimillion pound get-out clause could upset Moratti. Ever since he bought Inter in 1995, he has been obsessed with winning the Champions League. After all, Moratti grew up with in-house European success and was a wildly enthusiastic 20-year-old when Inter, then owned by his father, Angelo, won the European Cup in 1965.

Since repossessing the family jewels and buying back a seriously underperforming club, Massimo Moratti has spent an estimated €1billion assembling teams which, until recently, had only rewarded him with disappointment. All that ended with the coming of Mancini in 2004, then Mourinho four years later.

Such was the Moratti hunger for European success that even three consecutive league titles were not enough to guarantee Mancini's job. Moratti probably now reckons he did a good day's work the day he fired Mancini and hired Mourinho.

Seeing red...Totti pays the price for his foul on Balotelli in the Italian Cup Final

Amid all the hype surrounding Inter and Mourinho, not a lot of attention was paid to anything else. However, it is worth pointing out that, thanks to Inter's win over Bayern in the Bernabeu, Italy will still have four sides in the Champions League next season: namely Inter, Roma, Milan and Sampdoria.

Juventus, who are due to be coached next term by Gigi Del Neri – the man who guided Sampdoria to their first-ever Champions League place – crowned a miserable season finishing seventh, 17 points behind Inter. At the other end of the table there were no surprises, with Atalanta, Siena and Livorno going down.

Allegri for Milan

Del Neri is not the only change in the managerial merry-go-round, with former Cagliari coach Massimo Allegri due to take over from Leonardo at Milan, ex-Chievo coach Domenico Di Carlo replacing Del Neri at Sampdoria and Fiorentina's Cesare Prandelli taking over from Marcello Lippi as Italy coach immediately after the World Cup finals. Former Catania coach Sinisa Mihajlovic is taking over from Prandelli at Fiorentina, and he is replaced at Catania by ex-Siena boss Marco Giampaolo.

Meanwhile, lest people thought everything was about to change in the wake of Inter's triumph, UEFA rejected Italy's candidature to host the 2016 European Championship finals, awarding them instead to France.

This, of course, follows on from the April 2007 decision, taken in Cardiff, which saw UEFA reject Italy for the 2012 European Championship, with Poland and Ukraine eventually getting the vote.

This was clearly another painful reverse but Italy can hardly complain.

Somewhat against the run of play this season, Italian honour was preserved by a multi-national Inter squad featuring almost no Italian players – not a single one featured in the Final – and coached by a Portuguese. *Viva L'Italia*. ●

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
DIEGO MILITO (Inter)
Scored the goals that brought victory in the Champions League Final, in the Italian Cup Final and on the last day of the Serie A season against Siena.

COACH OF THE SEASON
JOSE MOURINHO (Inter)
What more is there to say? He picked the right players – he bought Milito, Lucio, Wesley Sneijder, Samuel Eto'o and Goran Pandev – and then made them into easily the most physically and mentally dominant side in the land.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
SALVATORE SIRIGU (Palermo)
Initially second-choice keeper, the 23-year-old seized his early season chance and was called into the national team squad for the March friendly against Cameroon in Monaco.

Remarkable rookie...Sirigu

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Didier does it again

Former captain Deschamps leads Marseille to the title in his first season as coach

FRANCE

HOWARD JOHNSON in Paris

THEY SAY A YEAR is a long time in football. If that's true, then 18 years must equate to several lifetimes in the world of the round ball. Incredibly though, that's how long it has been since Marseille – the country's biggest and best-supported club – were last crowned champions of Ligue 1.

Back in 1992 the likes of Basile Boli, Didier Deschamps, Abedi Pele, Chris Waddle and Jean-Pierre Papin had the Stade Velodrome jumping for joy when they lifted the title. But this May it was a new generation of *Marseillais* – Steve Mandanda, Lucho Gonzalez, Gabriel Heinze and Mamadou Niang – who ended all those years of hurt as the title finally headed south once more.

Under rain-sodden skies, Marseille beat Rennes 3-1 while, in one of those strange quirks of fate that football so often throws up, Lyon – the pre-eminent French team for almost all of the 21st century – handed the title to OM by beating nearest challengers Auxerre 2-1 on the same night.

> **"Delivering the title at the first time of asking as coach means Deschamps has now been elevated to the status of demigod in Marseille"**

Marseille's players and staff rightly celebrated their title victory out on the pitch in front of 55,377 of those long-suffering fans – and nobody will have taken more satisfaction from the achievement than coach Deschamps, the living link between the class of '92 and this year's winning outfit.

Succeeding popular Belgian coach Eric Gerets, who opted to move on at the end of last season after being openly criticised by some within the club, Deschamps already had legendary status for his contribution as a player. But delivering the title at the first time of asking as coach – having already led the team to victory in the League Cup Final against Bordeaux in March – means the World Cup winner has now been elevated to the status of demigod in Marseille. One of the banners in the Velodrome said it all: "Deschamps: player or coach, you're the one we love most."

Yet among all the euphoria there was also a palpable touch of sadness.

Marseille's long-time owner Robert Louis-Dreyfus had always dreamed of seeing his side carry off the league title, but in almost 13 years at the helm all Louis-Dreyfus – one of France's richest men – had to show for his efforts and investment was a solitary 2005 InterToto Cup victory.

Louis-Dreyfus had succumbed to leukaemia on July 4, 2009, but one of his last decisions had been to officially rubber-stamp the appointment of Deschamps as the club's new coach on May 5, 2009 – exactly a year to the day that Marseille finally sealed their title triumph.

Louis-Dreyfus had not always had the best of relationships with Marseille's notoriously spiky fans and many of them blamed him personally for the club's inability to punch its weight. However, his passion and love for OM, backed by not inconsiderable amounts of money from his personal pile, could never be doubted.

The club remains in the hands of the family, with Louis-Dreyfus' widow

At long last...Deschamps (left) celebrates with Stephane Mbia

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
MATHIEU VALBUENA (Marseille)
OM coach Didier Deschamps made it clear that the diminutive attacking midfielder wasn't a first choice at the start of the season, but the 25-year-old fought for his place and ended the campaign with Ligue 1 and League Cup winners medals – and a place in national coach Raymond Domenech's World Cup squad.

COACH OF THE SEASON
RENE GIRARD (Montpellier)
Deschamps may have won two trophies in his first season in charge at Marseille, but former France Under-21 coach Girard performed nothing less than a miracle in taking promoted Montpellier into Europe.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
EDEN HAZARD (Lille)
The 19-year-old Belgian was Ligue 1's newcomer of the year last time out as well, but his performances this term were a massive leap forward – and no less a talent than Zinedine Zidane himself says he is a future star.

Staking his claim...Valbuena

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Margarita at the helm, and no doubt the man himself would have loved more than anything to have heard his name being chanted by Marseille fans at the conclusion of the Rennes match with his beloved club as champions.

Poor domestic season

While congratulations are due to Marseille for finally finishing top of the pile, the truth of the matter is that Deschamps' side won the title in what was a poor domestic season overall.

Even though they finished as runners-up to Marseille and reached the semi-finals of the Champions League, Lyon were woefully inconsistent throughout the season. Meanwhile, title-holders Bordeaux suffered one of the most spectacular Ligue 1 crashes ever witnessed after they had been eliminated from Europe by Lyon. Before the first leg of their Champions League quarter-final clash, Laurent Blanc's side were top of Ligue 1. But in their final 10 matches Bordeaux took just eight points and slipped to sixth, a massive 14 points behind the new champions.

Despite his side's dramatic fall from grace, Blanc's star is still very much in the ascendant and – having left the club at the end of the season – he will now succeed Raymond Domenech as national coach after the World Cup.

Elsewhere, Paris Saint-Germain managed to salvage a season that was typically heading down the pan by beating Monaco 1-0 to win the French Cup for an eighth time.

Guillaume Hoarau's extra-time goal ensured that there will be European football at the Parc des Princes in 2010-11, but coach Antoine Kombouare will have to do far better than a mid-table finish in the league next time out if he is to satisfy the capital club's fans and shareholders.

Besides Marseille, the big winners in France this season have been some of the country's lesser lights.

Auxerre secured third spot – and entry to the Champions League play-offs – with a last-minute goal to beat Sochaux 2-1 on the final day of the season, while there were Europa League places for Lille and Montpellier – the latter having only been promoted to the top flight at the end of the previous campaign.

Down at the bottom it's no surprise Grenoble and Boulogne are saying goodbye to Ligue 1 as neither had sufficient quality to eat at the top table. But the descent of Le Mans has raised a few eyebrows, given they had a reputation for being a well-run and ambitious club, with a new 25,000-seat stadium due to open in September.

The trio will be replaced by Arles, Brest and Caen next season. ●

A Canterbury tale

Underdogs go all the way to the Grand Final

Final showdown...the Dragons, led out by captain Dan Terris (right), were finally overhauled by Waitakere 3-1

NEW ZEALAND

PAUL MOON in Christchurch

IF THE ALL WHITES feel in need of a little help in their World Cup adventure in South Africa, Ricki Herbert's side could do worse than draw inspiration from Canterbury United's remarkable season in the New Zealand championship.

The Christchurch club won the wooden spoon in the two previous seasons and actually withdrew from the competition last June before having a change of heart and successfully seeking reinstatement. Coached by Liverpudlian Keith Braithwaite, they squeaked into the play-offs this time on goal difference, ahead of fifth-placed Otago United, and were expected to be semi-final fodder for holders Auckland City, who had accumulated 13 points more.

And those expectations seemed to be coming to fruition when Auckland – the four times champions who finished fifth at the 2009 Club World Cup – notched a routine 2-1 away win in the first leg. However, the return a week later saw the South Islanders record an emphatic and deserved 3-0 eclipse of the ageing City line-up.

During the same weekend, holders Waitakere United had eliminated Team Wellington in a tie producing even greater drama.

The capital city's standard bearers won the opening encounter 3-2 and extended their advantage 10 minutes into the second leg. But Ryan de Vries pulled one back in the 71st minute and then, deep into the stoppage period, a Brent Fisher header snatched victory on the away goals ruling.

Waitakere were therefore given an opportunity to both repeat their 2008 triumph and ensure that Auckland's stranglehold on the championship was extended to its entire six-year history.

But when Tom Lancaster gave Canterbury a sixth-minute lead in the Final, the odds were on a domestic trophy being Christchurch-bound for the first time since now-boss Braithwaite captained Christchurch United to the Chatham Cup in 1991.

The match turned completely just after the half-hour mark though, with Solomon Islander Benjamin Totori equalising and Canterbury's Paul Dirou being sent off for a dangerous tackle.

With their tiring opponents reduced to 10 men, Waitakere dictated. Suddenly former Lincoln City striker Allan Pearce appeared capable of scoring whenever he received the ball and duly did so in the 57th minute. Totori's second clinched Waitakere's success with 18 minutes remaining.

Although they had been beaten, Canterbury did gain some consolation when midfielder Aaron Clapham was voted player of the championship and earned a surprise call-up for Herbert's World Cup squad.

> "Canterbury were expected to be semi-final fodder"

Strength in depth

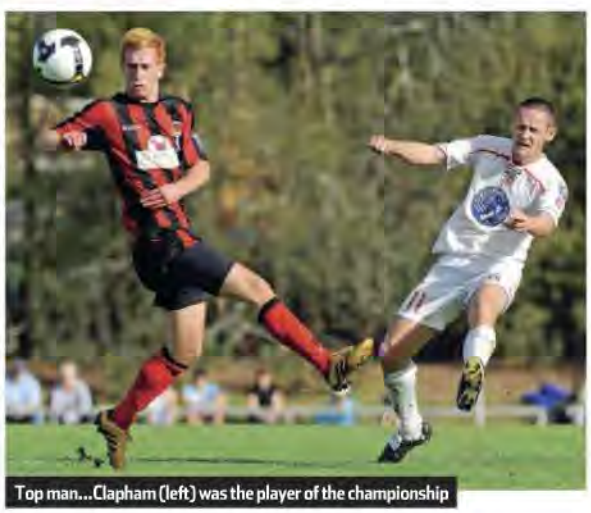
The Canterbury Academy's 6-0 thrashing of Waitakere in the National Youth Cup also suggests that the Mainland district's revival is built upon a solid foundation.

Christchurch football's depth is already proven. Seven players from the city were recruited by Otago United as the campaign commenced and they played a significant role in the Dunedin outfit's vast improvement under local stalwart Malcolm Fleming.

Fleming succeeded 42-cap Irishman Terry Phelan, whose final 56 games at the helm brought just seven victories.

The league's other high-profile coach, ex-Scotland international goalkeeper Jonathan Gould, also left his club, Hawkes Bay United, for a position on the staff at Wellington Phoenix of the Australian A-League.

Overall, Kiwi clubs have made admirable strides in cutting costs and the frugally run, ostensibly amateur, competition is better placed financially than it has been for a while. As a consequence, New Zealand Football now hopes to add two new members for the 2010-11 season. ●



Top man...Clapham (left) was the player of the championship

Welcome back... Togo's Guillaume Brenner, Malick Korodowou and Euloge Ahodikpe (left to right) can now compete in the Nations Cup qualifiers

Mystery date

There is widespread bemusement at CAF's decision to switch the African Nations Cup to a non-World Cup year

IT'S ALL CHANGE for the African Nations Cup and a bizarre change at that. There will be an edition in 2012 – and another one a year later.

The tournament will continue to be hosted every two years, but now in odd years rather than even.

It will remain, for the meantime, in its contentious January slot, with participating countries still able, under FIFA regulations, to call up players from top European clubs even if their seasons are in full swing.

The official explanation for the switch is that the Confederation of African Football (CAF) no longer wants its flagship tournament to be played in the same year as a World Cup; a sharing of the spotlight that was never a problem when it first clashed in 1970.

Indeed, it has been seen as a major advantage for Africa that its World Cup-bound teams had a unique chance to play in a tournament just six months before the world event, gaining an invaluable preparation opportunity denied to other continents.

The surprise decision, made at a CAF executive committee meeting in Cairo just before the 2010 tournament in South Africa, effectively throws out of sync the entire co-ordinated international calendar and means Africa will be in the middle of its World Cup qualifiers for the future finals, starting with the 2014 tournament in Brazil, and playing the Nations Cup at the same time.

CAF president Issa Hayatou led the insistence on the change, forcing it through an unusually sceptical executive committee. He had travelled to Libya beforehand to secure their agreement to bring forward by a year the tournament they had originally been scheduled to host in 2014. Bidding is now open for the 2015 tournament.

The increasing spoils of the Nations Cup, whose television-rights earnings have escalated drastically in recent years, is an obvious attraction but the change has little logic behind it.

> "The decision effectively throws out of sync the entire co-ordinated international calendar"

There will be a usual qualifying campaign for the 2012 Nations Cup finals, which are to be co-hosted by Gabon and Equatorial Guinea, two other oil-rich states, but to determine the 16 finalists for the following year's tournament in Libya, there will be just two rounds of knockout preliminaries.

First, all the countries who fail to qualify for the 2012 finals will play off against each other in a cup-style knockout format and the winners of the ties will then progress to the next knockout round against the 16 finalists from the 2012 tournament.

Togo ban lifted

The 2012 preliminaries will include Togo, whose four-year ban from the Nations Cup was lifted after some face-saving brokering by Sepp Blatter.

Blatter oversaw a supposed agreement between Hayatou and the Togolese, in which Togo admitted they were wrong to quit the Nations Cup in Angola, despite having their team bus shot up and losing two delegation members to separatist guerillas in Angola's northern Cabinda enclave.

Hayatou was heavily criticised across Africa for his heavy-handed action at a time of widespread sympathy and understanding of Togo's plight. Their government insisted they go home while CAF was trying to persuade the players to stay.

CAF regulations state that any team pulling out on the eve of the Nations Cup faces a four-year ban. But it was a rule the governing body could have easily overlooked – as they do with so many other regulations – given the terrible circumstances.

It has all been about saving face. First, hosts Angola needed Togo to stay and play, to temper the crisis triggered by the surprise attack. Hayatou obviously felt he could deliver this but did not. His retribution was the ban, but the subsequent criticism reached an uncomfortable level, including admonishments from African heads of state and government officials.

Togo appealed to the Switzerland-based Court of Arbitration for Sport and Blatter got himself appointed mediator, handing Togo a ticket back to the Nations Cup as long as they went through the pretence of accepting Hayatou's ban was justified.

Togo now compete in Group 11 of the qualifiers with Botswana, Chad, Malawi and Tunisia. Extra dates have been brought in for the group, which will start while the World Cup in South Africa is still on. ●

Champions...Bayern coach Van Gaal (far right) and his team acknowledge their supporters back in Munich

King Louis

Van Gaal revives Bavarian pride

GERMANY

NICK BIDWELL in Munich

FORGET ABOUT Maximilian I and Ludwig II, those much-revered Bavarian kings of yesteryear. In Bayern Munich coach Louis Van Gaal, the southern German state has a new unofficial monarch who is as committed as ever to absolute rule, yet still capable of satisfying the masses with a most memorable 2009-10 – a campaign in which his side regained the Bundesliga title, scooped the German Cup with a 4-0 hammering of Werder Bremen in the Final and finished as runners-ups in the Champions League.

Despite all the trophies he was won with Ajax, Barcelona, AZ Alkmaar and now Bayern, Van Gaal's many critics – most of whom are Dutch – never tire of portraying him as a soulless purveyor of set patterns of play, a systems analyst with no feel for the intuitive aspect of the game. But those of the Bayern persuasion don't see him that way. They just admire a coach who, in his first season in charge, has not only won big, but has combined results with panache, and – unlike predecessors Ottmar Hitzfeld and Jurgen Klinsmann – was not afraid to give home-grown youth a chance; with defender Holger Badstuber and attacking all-rounder Thomas Muller both coming from nowhere to establish themselves as first-teamers.

Not that Van Gaal and Bayern looked a match made in heaven in the early part of the season. In late November, after just five wins in their opening 13 games, the men from the Allianz Arena were a pitiful seventh in the table and the picture was no brighter in the Champions League, where home and away defeats to Bordeaux had left them on the verge of first-phase elimination.

Set for the axe

Accused of constantly tinkering with his formation, going out of his way to clash with star names (especially French midfield maverick Franck Ribery and Italian striker Luca Toni) and recommending dud buys (Croat wing-back Danijel Pranjic and Dutch full-back Edson Braafheid), Van Gaal seemed set for the axe, only for his skin to be saved by the speech of his life at the club AGM and last-gasp qualification for the Champions

League knockout phase courtesy of a fine 4-1 victory away to Juventus.

Turin was to prove the turning point of Bayern's season. Players who initially were not convinced by the coach's sacred principles – collective endeavour, patience and good possession – suddenly tuned in and, with Van Gaal intelligent enough to trim his confrontational sails a little and call a halt on the personnel and tactical experiments, the Bavarians were now ready to roll.

An excellent run of nine straight wins between December and February put them back in the title hunt and even though they suffered the odd springtime stumble, notably losing to Eintracht Frankfurt and Stuttgart, their procession towards a record 22nd title was never really in question.

"We're the best," screamed Van Gaal as he manically leapt about the balcony of Munich's city hall with the Bundesliga trophy. And so they were; the team with the most wins (20), the most goals (72) and tied with Schalke for the meanest defence (just 31 conceded in 34 games).

Of all the Bayern heroes, two individuals stood head and shoulders above the rest. Bastian Schweinsteiger turned out to be a natural central-midfield regulator after being switched in mid-term from his wide-left berth, while Dutch winger Arjen Robben enjoyed a brilliant season, constantly belying the Van Gaal credo that the unit is what makes the difference.

Bayern certainly made a wise investment when they paid Real Madrid £25million for Robben in August last year. The scorer of 16 goals in the Bundesliga and Champions League strikes against Fiorentina, Manchester United and Lyon, he had defenders in a panic every time he received the ball and even suffered less injuries than normal.

The losers in the Bayern camp are not hard to locate. Germany international Miroslav Klose had to make do with the role of deluxe reserve, as did their biggest buys of last summer – striker Mario Gomez and Ukraine midfield holder Anatoliy Tymoshchuk. The pair might have cost a fortune – Gomez a cool £35m from Stuttgart and Tymoshchuk £11m from Zenit St Petersburg – but Van Gaal simply did not rate them and had no problem laying the blame for their acquisition on the board.

Nor will Ribery be in the mood to uncork the bubbly. Sidelined for much of the season with a succession of injuries and not exactly forming a mutual admiration society with Van Gaal, his red card in the Champions League semi-final against Lyon and eventual ban from the Final, perfectly summed up the worst season of his pro career. It is somewhat peculiar then that he has chosen to sign a five-year extension. Better the devil you know, perhaps?

Reversing the trend

At the same time as Bayern were going from strength to strength in the second half of the season, other clubs seemed hell-bent on reversing the trend. Hoffenheim, the little south-western side who were, for a while, title contenders in 2008-09, only won four games in 2010, going from Euro wannabees to mid-table nonentities, while Hamburg suffered a similar post-Christmas slump, a disastrous sequence which would lead to the sack for out-of-his-depth coach Bruno Labbadia. He has been replaced for next season by Armin Veh, who led Stuttgart to the title in 2007.

Bayer Leverkusen's season was also an anti-climax. Playing some mouth-watering attacking football and benefitting hugely from the defensive know-how of veteran Finnish central defender Sami Hyypia, they made Bundesliga history by going unbeaten in their first 24 games and for a long time cut the figures of champions-elect. Sadly, though, they could not maintain the supersonic pace, fading away in the final laps to finish fourth.

The Leverkusener will be joined in next term's Europa League by a young and thrusting Borussia Dortmund, and Stuttgart who, invigorated by the arrival in December of Swiss coach Christian Gross, were the best team in the country after the winter break, most impressively accelerating away from the relegation zone.

Over in Gelsenkirchen, Schalke supporters celebrated their Bundesliga runners-up spot with the exuberance of a lotto winner. Apart from prolific striker Kevin Kuranyi – who has now left for Dynamo Moscow – they are essentially a workaday side, a solid if rather unadventurous outfit whose main goal threat comes from set pieces. But in contrast to so many other teams, they wring every last drop from their resources and that is the signature of coach Felix Magath, who in his first season at the helm was his usual mixture of hard taskmaster and utter pragmatist.

Third-place and with it a ticket for the Champions League preliminaries deservedly went to Werder Bremen. The team with the most away victories (nine), their dedication to hara-kiri attacking football may be naive, but what entertainment.

Down among the dead men all season, Hertha Berlin fell through the relegation trapdoor, accompanied by Bochum, whose legendary fighting spirit deserted them just at the wrong moment. With Kaiserslautern and cult Hamburg outfit St Pauli travelling in the opposite direction, there will be even more atmosphere at Bundesliga stadia in 2010-11. ●

> **"It is peculiar that Ribery has signed a five-year extension. Better the devil you know, perhaps?"**

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
ARJEN ROBBEN (Bayern Munich)
Forty-eight hours after signing from Real Madrid last summer, the Dutch right-winger scored twice against Wolfsburg and continued to be thrillingly decisive for the rest of the campaign. A class apart.

COACH OF THE SEASON
LOUIS VAN GAAL (Bayern Munich)
In marked contrast to his easy-going predecessor Jurgen Klinsmann, the bluff, gruff Dutchman did not hesitate to exert his authority over all of the superstar egos at Bayern. It took a little time, but by December the squad was in line and about to trample the opposition into the dust.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
MATS HUMMELS (Borussia Dortmund)
Young centre-back who helped lay the foundation for his club's creditable fifth-place finish. Athletic, resourceful and combative, he is no fool with the ball at his feet either and weighed-in with his share of goals.

Classy...Robben

Full stretch...Kashima Antlers skipper Mitsuo Ogasawara (left) gets in a shot despite the attentions of Pohang Steelers' No Byung-jun

The force is with Korea

Japan nowhere to be seen as the K-League provides half the teams contesting the Asian Champions League quarter-finals

ASIA AFC
MICHAEL CHURCH in Hong Kong

IT IS LESS than two years since Gamba Osaka became the second successive J.League club to lift the Asian Champions League trophy, yet as the 2010 edition of the competition reaches its climax the Japanese are conspicuous only by their absence.

None of the country's four representatives reached the last eight – the first time that has happened since 2006 – after Gamba and J.League champions Kashima Antlers went out in the second round to Suwon Bluewings and Pohang Steelers respectively.

With neither Kawasaki Frontale nor Sanfrecce Hiroshima qualifying for the knockout phase, the continental club championship has a new force rising – or rather, returning – to prominence.

Joining Suwon and Pohang in the quarter-finals are fellow South Korean sides Jeonbuk Motors and Seongnam Ilhwa, signalling a seismic shift in the tournament's landscape and a change in fortunes for the country's clubs that has been in motion for the last two seasons.

Spurred on by the success of Japan's Urawa Reds in 2007 and Gamba the following year, South Korean clubs have collectively raised their game and are now the dominant force in Asian club football.

Pohang won the title in 2009 – defeating Saudi Arabia's Al Ittihad in the Final – and they remain on track to become only the second club to successfully defend the trophy since the beginning of the Champions League era in 2002.

To do so, though, they will first have to see off Iranian side Zob Ahan, the surprise package so far.

Based in the southern city of Esfahan, Zob Ahan beat compatriots Mes Kerman in the second round after making waves in the group stages by finishing ahead of big-spending Uzbeks Bunyodkor and Saudi Arabians Al Ittihad, who were eliminated after finishing third.

Bunyodkor squeezed through to the knockout phase by the skin of their teeth, only to fall heavily in the second round by virtue of a 3-0 defeat by Eric Gerets' Al Hilal, a result that signalled the end for former Brazil coach Luiz Felipe Scolari in Tashkent.

"I said it before that Al Hilal are a great team that cannot be easily defeated when their players are at their best," said Scolari. "Unlike my team, the Al Hilal players made the most of the chances they had. They scored and won the match. Simply put, this is what football really is."

Al Hilal will meet Qatar's Al Gharafa in the quarter-finals after the Doha-based club saw off the challenge of Pakhtakor in the second round, while Jeonbuk Motors – who eliminated Adelaide United with a thrilling 3-2 extra-time win – meet another Saudi side, Al Shabab, for whom Waleed Al Gizani scored in the final minute to give them a 3-2 win over Iran champions Esteghlal.

The Koreans are guaranteed at least one club in the semi-finals with Suwon Bluewings and Seongnam Ilhwa drawn to face each other in the quarters.

The clubs, winners of three Asian Club Championship titles between them from 1995 to 2001, have a long-standing rivalry but Suwon will go into the clash in September with a new man at the helm after former South Korea coach Cha Bum-kun, twice a UEFA Cup winner during his playing days in Germany, announced his intention to stand down.

Cha, who has been frustrated by the club's struggles in the K-League this season, said: "Six-and-a-half years in charge is not a short time. It is not easy to concentrate and keep winning for so long.

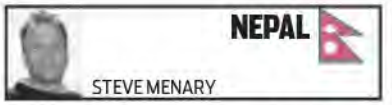
"But I am happy to have shared my experiences with the players and been able to build my own team in style. We won many titles and I have had many happy times with Suwon." ●

> **"It is not easy to keep winning for so long"**
>
> *Suwon Bluewings' coach Cha Bum-kun announces he is quitting after more than six years in charge*

Ambitious...Raju Tamang (far left) in action for the Nepal national team, who are ranked 161st in the world

Fighting spirit

Nepalese football is still recovering from a decade-long civil war



NEPAL

STEVE MENARY

IN MANY PARTS of south Asia, cricket is indisputably the most popular sport – but not in Nepal, where football is still number one despite problems that would have killed off the sport elsewhere.

The All Nepal Football Association (ANFA), which runs three divisions, is so prone to infighting that at one point the country's top league, the Martyr's Memorial A-Division, simply ground to a halt.

All the clubs in Nepal represent communities, and there are no privately-owned teams, but the ANFA's efforts are focused on the cities where just 17 per cent of Nepal's 28.5 million population live.

That might not be an issue, but Nepal's footballers and football supporters are traditionally found in the hills and in the eastern part of the country, where an estimated 80 per cent of the players originate.

There are a dozen teams in the A-League and six (NRT, RCT, MMC, Sankata Club, Machhindra and Boys Union Club) come from the city of Kathmandu, while another three sides represent the capital-centric Police, Army and Armed Police Force.

The A-Division has only been running properly for three years; all the fixtures are played in Kathmandu's main National Stadium. Two games are played on one day but only a handful of clubs, such as Three Star, command large support. A Three Star fixture with defending champions Nepal Police Club on the same day as a match between other popular sides, such as MMC and the Army, could attract a crowd of more than 10,000 but the stadium holds around 25,000.

"We have many problems with the political situation, so many political parties, so our football is not going smoothly," sighs former Nepal captain Bal Gopal Maharjan, now the coach at Three Star.

Nepal's King Gyanendra was ousted after a decade-long civil war fought by Maoist insurgents, who won elections held in 2008.

> "The conflict is now over. However, the constitutional change has seeped into the game at all levels"

The Maoist insurgency had destabilised the Nepalese game for years. Englishman Stephen Constantine recalls the lack of facilities and the Maoists being the biggest obstacles in an otherwise enjoyable time managing Nepal's national team.

The conflict is now over, however the constitutional change has seeped into the game at all levels, from Mahendra Police Club dropping the first part of their name (as Mahendra was the name of the old king), to entire tournaments being scrapped.

Prize attractions

For Nepal's clubs, cup competitions staged by district associations that often offered prize money were traditionally more attractive than playing in a league.

Tournaments along the Terai belt, such as the Aha Cup in Pokhara or the Tillotama Gold Cup in Butwal, were popular with crowds and players, however most were closely associated with the old Royal family. No longer politically acceptable, many are no longer staged.

The King's Birthday Cup saw sides from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and South Korea invited to take on Nepalese teams, but after the king was deposed and the Maoists took control, Nepal's premier knockout tournament was also scrapped.

The Maoists' People Liberation Army organized a cup competition last year, but the most popular knockout event was the British Gurkha Cup, won by Three Star this year, pocketing prize money of around £2,000.

With Nepal now coming to terms with peace and democracy, Nepal's footballers hope that the game can progress. However, many clubs lack sponsors, some do not even have an office and there is not even a fixed calendar. And those fixtures that are released are not always followed.

"Day by day Nepalese football is professionalising," says striker Hari Khadka, who has played in India, Mexico and Malta. "But it takes a time. It is still difficult to live a decent life as a player, but for some players like me who have played outside Nepal it's easier."

For Nepalese players looking to emulate the revered Khadka, the chances are diminishing rapidly as the rapid development of the game in India and Bangladesh has seen playing quotas filled with Africans and South Americans. ●

Chelsea double up

The title race went to the wire, but the truly significant result was a change in the top four

ENGLAND

GAVIN HAMILTON in London

THE 2009-10 SEASON will not be remembered as a vintage campaign, but it may turn out to have been a hugely significant one. The lack of a truly outstanding team saw the title race go to the wire. There was also an absorbing contest for the fourth Champions League place – with Tottenham Hotspur succeeding at the expense of Manchester City, and Liverpool facing the prospect of a slow and potentially irreversible decline.

Chelsea, under Carlo Ancelotti, won the league and FA Cup double and thus prevented Manchester United from winning a fourth successive title. Another championship for United would have equalled Liverpool's record of 18 titles; instead, it was Chelsea who celebrated their first championship since 2006.

Ancelotti oversaw a quiet revolution at Chelsea. With less to spend in the transfer market than his predecessors, the Italian worked his existing resources to fashion a team that adopted a more attacking style – and managed to get the previously malfunctioning Didier Drogba and Nicolas Anelka playing together in a 4-4-2 set-up – to the delight of owner Roman Abramovich.

United – without Cristiano Ronaldo but with Wayne Rooney earning accolades in a central attacking role – pushed Chelsea all the way. However their achievements on the pitch were overshadowed by mounting anger among their fans at the financial mismanagement of the club by the Glazer family.

Two-horse race

Liverpool's implosion and Arsenal's injuries would eventually see the championship develop into a two-horse race. While Arsenal were hit by the loss of key players such as striker Robin Van Persie, Rafa Benitez left Liverpool following failure both at home and in the Champions League, which they exited at the group stage.

The season had begun with predictions that big-spending Man City would break into the top four. In the end, the cartel was broken, but by Harry Redknapp's Spurs. The big four were last broken up in 2005, though Everton's stay was short-lived. This time around, the financial resources of those clubs close to the top four promises a more open competition next season.

City's Middle East owners had sacked Mark Hughes just before Christmas, bringing in former Internazionale boss Roberto Mancini in a bid for Champions League football. But it was an English manager, Redknapp, who took fourth place after steering his London side away from the wrong end of the table in the previous campaign.

Another English manager, Roy Hodgson, continued his good work at Fulham. They finished 12th in the league but performed wonders in the Europa League: victories over Juventus, Shakhtar Donetsk and Wolfsburg took them to the Final in Hamburg.

Striking a pose...Drogba hailed the 2009-10 season as his best ever, and weighed in with goals galore in league and cup competitions

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
WAYNE ROONEY (Manchester United)
Rose to the challenge of leading United's attack in the post-Ronaldo era – and scored 26 league goals.

COACH OF THE SEASON
ROY HODGSON (Fulham)
The ever-genial Hodgson oversaw Fulham's amazing run to the Europa League Final, making him the lead contender to succeed Rafa Benitez at Liverpool.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
ADAM JOHNSON (Manchester City)
Joined City from second-tier Middlesbrough in January and almost played his way into England's World Cup squad.

At full stretch...Rooney

Read daily dispatches at worldsoccer.com

In the Champions League, there were no English teams in the last four for the first time since 2003, leading to much soul-searching about the flight of players to Spain and the ability of English clubs to attract and retain the continent's top players.

Wider financial situation

Of greater concern, though, was the wider financial situation. At the other end of the spectrum – both in financial and football terms – Portsmouth crashed out of the league as they became the first top-flight club to go into administration since the Premier League broke away from the rest of the Football League in 1992. They were joined by Burnley and Hull City, while Newcastle United (champions), West Bromwich Albion and Blackpool – after a gap of 39 years – travelled the other way.

Collectively, English clubs now carry more net debt – £3.3billion – than the rest of Europe put together. A significant portion (£1.4million) of that debt is in the form of "soft loans" from club owners such as Abramovich, but it is still a hugely troubling situation.

The debt foisted on Manchester United by the Glazer family now totals more than £700m. Recent revelations that the Glazer's US shopping mall businesses are heavily indebted – with mortgages totalling £388m – mean that the Glazers are likely to resist any attempts by wealthy United fans – the so-called "Red Knights" – to buy the club as United is currently the Glazers' primary source of income.

Over at Liverpool, the club has been hamstrung by the impasse between American co-owners Tom Hicks and George Gillett. The delay in agreeing a settlement with departing manager Benitez was just the latest example of how Liverpool have slipped behind United, Chelsea and City in the financial pecking order.

> **"In the Champions League, there were no English teams in the last four for the first time since 2003"**

Exit from Liverpool...Benitez

The real danger for Liverpool is that, without Champions League football, leading players Fernando Torres and Steven Gerrard will be tempted elsewhere. ●

MADRID

Inter end long wait

Forty-five years after their last triumph, the Italians won a third European Cup. Keir Radnedge reports from Madrid

WHEN THE original European Champions Cup was launched in the mid-1950s it was all about the players: Di Stefano, Kopa, Schiaffino and their ilk. Now – such are the developments over more than half a century – it is all about the coaches.

Hence the showdown in the Estadio Santiago Bernabeu between Bayern Munich and Internazionale was presented as less about Arjen Robben versus Wesley Sneijder, and more about Louis Van Gaal against Jose Mourinho.

The "Special One" exerts an almost mesmeric effect on the media; hardly more so than when he was clearly in charge of Inter for the last time before staying on in Madrid to take on the greatest challenge of his remarkable career, turning Real's limitless silver into silverware.

The facts were simple as the newly recrowned champions of Germany and Italy jousted for the status relinquished by Barcelona. Bayern missed out on what would have been a fifth European crown, and first since 2001, while Inter finally landed their third, but the first since 1965. Van Gaal failed to repeat his 1995 success with Ajax, while his one-time pupil at Barcelona celebrated a repeat of his own 2004 victory with Porto.

May 22 (Madrid)
Internazionale 2 (Milito 34, 70)
Bayern Munich 0
HT: 1:0. **Att:** 73,170.
Ref: Webb (Eng)

Inter: Julio Cesar - Maicon, Lucio, Samuel, Chivu (Stankovic 68) - Zanetti, Cambiasso - Eto'o, Sneijder, Pandev (Muntari 79) - Milito (Materazzi 90).

Bayern: Butt - Lahm, Van Buyten, Demichelis, Badstuber - Robben, Schweinsteiger, Van Bommel, Altintop (Klose 73) - Muller, Olic (Gomez 74).

Jumping Jose...Mourinho (left) and substitute Marco Materazzi celebrate Inter's triumph

Mourinho continues to write not only all his own scripts but other people's as well; thus Inter's achievement was a demonstration of the power of destiny and also of dynasty. In 1964 and 1965 Inter's players had celebrated along with president Angelo Moratti; now a new generation celebrated with another presidential Moratti in Massimo, Angelo's son.

Aggressive intent

Bayern had marginally the better of the opening exchanges. They forced the first corner after 13 minutes and showed the more obvious aggressive intent. Four minutes later and an angled free kick from Robben forced a second corner. Unfortunately for Bayern, the advancing Martin Demichelis mistimed his header and the opportunity was gone once more.

Robben had an even better chance himself in the 27th minute after Ivica Olic and Thomas Muller had bundled their way through the front of the penalty box. However, the Dutchman, perhaps surprised at the gift, scooped the ball harmlessly over the bar.

The miss proved costly when Diego Milito scored his fifth goal in 11 Champions League outings.

Julio Cesar thumped a long clearance downfield, Sneijder – outstanding again as he had been all season – played in Milito, and the Argentinian stepped into the penalty box and coolly delayed his shot until keeper Hans-Jorg Butt had committed himself, placing the ball over the advancing keeper and into the net.

Both teams could have scored within minutes of the start of the second half. First Muller, put clear by Hamit Altintop, was foiled by Julio Cesar then, at the other end, a shot from Goran Pandev, after a Milito

Champions... Inter skipper Zanetti hoists the Champions League trophy

That's clinched it...Milito is in no doubt after his second goal

break on the left, was turned acrobatically over the bar by Butt.

By now the strategy and tactics were clear as daylight. Inter were denied the raiding power of Maicon down the right by Bayern's use of Altintop wide on the left of their midfield, but his very presence in that role illustrated the fact that Van Gaal's men were themselves missing the skill and creativity on that wing of the suspended Franck Ribery.

Thus the Germans regularly looked to Robben who, as the game proceeded, so continued to tease the life out of Cristian Chivu that Mourinho was forced to switch skipper Javier Zanetti to left-back instead.

At the other end, Milito was having much the better of his duel with Daniel Van Buyten and, as time went on, so Pandev found more and more space to threaten danger along with Samuel Eto'o, who was on his way to a record-equalling third winner's medal.

Over the top...Pandev hurdles a challenge from Bayern skipper Van Bommel

Beyond reach

The game was slipping decisively beyond Bayern's reach. In the 70th minute they were exposed too far forward and Eto'o slipped a delightful pass through a keyhole gap on the left for Milito to wrong-foot Van Buyten and score once again. Cue the *Nerazzurri* fireworks.

Afterwards, Mourinho was initially reticent to make any reference to his likely Real Madrid future, but, clearly, after leading Inter to the treble of Champions League plus Italian league and cup, no further challenge remained for him in Milan and in the Italian football maelstrom which he so dislikes.

He even wrote his own Real Madrid job description, saying: "I'm very proud to be coach of Inter but, should I become coach of Real Madrid, then it would be because Real Madrid is a club with a huge dimension and want the same from me as other clubs have done: they want me to win and face down difficult challenges.

"If you want to win then you need a particular spirit and you need to be

"Mourinho was reticent to mention Real. But he had no more challenges left in Milan"

able to build your team and the team must work together. This is the pride I feel in looking now at Inter: a magnificent family of footballers who have worked endlessly to achieve all that – from the groundsman to the players out on the pitch, and even the players who never got to play a single game.

"They all made up a marvellous family and that was the most important element."

Grumpy exchange

Van Gaal, who had engaged in a grumpy exchange with Mourinho via the media ahead of the game, did not suffer defeat particularly graciously. He pointed out an unpunished penalty-box handball by Maicon and posited that Bayern had played the finer – "more difficult" – football and Inter had stolen the Cup on the counter-attack.

Not that Mourinho minded. He was already looking far ahead into dreamland, talking about grand slams, about the unique possibility of being a managerial league champion in England, in Italy and – he hopes and plans – in Spain.

Then, what are the odds on a Champions League treble? ●

Trickery...Robben teases Walter Samuel with some sleight of foot

Old pals... Mourinho (left) and Van Gaal greet each other before the Final

2010 FINAL – KEY MOMENTS

34MINS
Milito's cushioned header off a long punt forward from Julio Cesar allows Sneijder to send him clear of the Bayern defence and he lofts the ball over the advancing Butt. 1-0.

43MINS
Milito crosses for Sneijder who is unmarked in the middle but he shoots straight at Butt. Great chance missed.

46MINS
Muller is played though on goal but Inter keeper Julio Cesar blocks the low shot with his legs.

56 MINS
Robben's curling shot is tipped away by Julio Cesar.

70MINS
Milito collects Eto'o's pass on the break and beats Van Buyten on the edge of the area before shooting high into the far corner beyond Butt. 2-0.

92MINS
Final whistle. Inter celebrate a third European Cup. It's a second triumph for Mourinho and a third winner's medal for Eto'o.

HAMBURG

Unstoppable...Forlan (far left) turns home the winning goal

Atletico adventure

Keir Radnedge reports from Hamburg on a third European trophy for the Spanish side – and heartache for Fulham

May 12 (Hamburg)
Atletico Madrid 2 (Forlan 31, 116)
Fulham 1 (Davies 37)
After extra time
HT: 1-1; 90min: 1-1. **Att:** 49,000. **Ref:** Rizzoli (Italy)

Atletico: De Gea - Ujfalusi, Perea, Alvaro Dominguez, Antonio Lopez - Reyes (Salvio 78), Paulo Assuncao, Raul Garcia, Simao (Jurado 68) - Aguero (Juan Valera 119), Forlan.

Fulham: Schwarzer - Baird, Hughes, Hangeland, Konchesky - Duff (Nevland 84), Murphy (Greening 118), Etuhu, Davies - Gera - Zamora (Dempsey 55).

ATLETICO MADRID wrote another chapter in their own significant history by defeating Fulham after extra time in the first Final of the Europa League, once the UEFA Cup and before that the Inter-Cities Fairs Cup.

If such an exploration into the history books sounds more artisan than celebrity then that sums up both Atletico's own ethos as well as the relationship between the Europa League and its big brother, the Champions League.

No wonder Atletico enjoyed the moment. At the start of term in Madrid all the talk was about Real winning the Champions League in their own Bernabeu home; instead it was Atletico who ended up with continental silverware.

Mischievously, they also secured only their third international trophy in the home of semi-finalists Hamburg. The Germans had anticipated a happy homecoming of their own until falling against Fulham in the semi-finals.

"The new format is much more interesting"

Fulham manager Roy Hodgson

UEFA president Michel Platini must have been happy to witness a positive conclusion to the first season of the rebranded competition.

The Fairs Cup and UEFA Cup – until latter years – had been two-leg knockout tournaments. Then the first round of the UEFA Cup was converted into a group stage at the urging of clubs who wanted a more defined income stream. However, the initial system was unfathomably complex with groups of five teams who played each other only once, home or away depending on the luck of the draw.

Such complexities were raised with the then-chief executive of UEFA, Lars-Christer Olsson, before the initial reorganisation and he explained: "Rebranding on its own is not sufficient. It has to work as a sporting competition. If it's not right it will fail and we will have to think again."

It did; so they did. The outcome has been promising, though the competition's identity remains compromised by the mid-season arrival of eight "failures" from the Champions League.

Added attention was secured, however, by Platini's sagacity in persuading the law-making International Board to use the Europa League as a testing centre for the experiment with goal-line officials which is his (and FIFA president Sepp Blatter's) preferred, last-chance-saloon alternative to goal-line technology.

The jury remains out for a further two years on a trial which has now been extended worldwide across all competitions by the IFAB.

Perhaps Fulham manager Roy Hodgson was a little over the top when he said: "It's been a great competition and we can only say great things about it." But he qualified his words by adding: "The new format is much more interesting because it's much closer to that of the Champions League. UEFA should be congratulated on having two such outstanding competitions which will continue to attract and entertain their public."

Fulham played with determination and vigour but lacked that little extra class and experience, notwithstanding their outstanding earlier victories over holders Shakhtar Donetsk, Juventus, Wolfsburg and Hamburg.

Atletico might have taken the lead on 15 minutes after confusion between Dickson Etuhu and Zoltan Gera saw Sergio Aguero angle a neat pass to his left but Diego Forlan's shot bobbled wide off keeper Mark Schwarzer's left-hand post.

Minutes later the goalkeeper saved high up, at the second attempt, from a right-wing free-kick by Jose Antonio Reyes. But he had no chance in the 31st minute after a sweeping Reyes-Simao-Aguero move sliced Fulham open for Forlan to stab Atletico ahead.

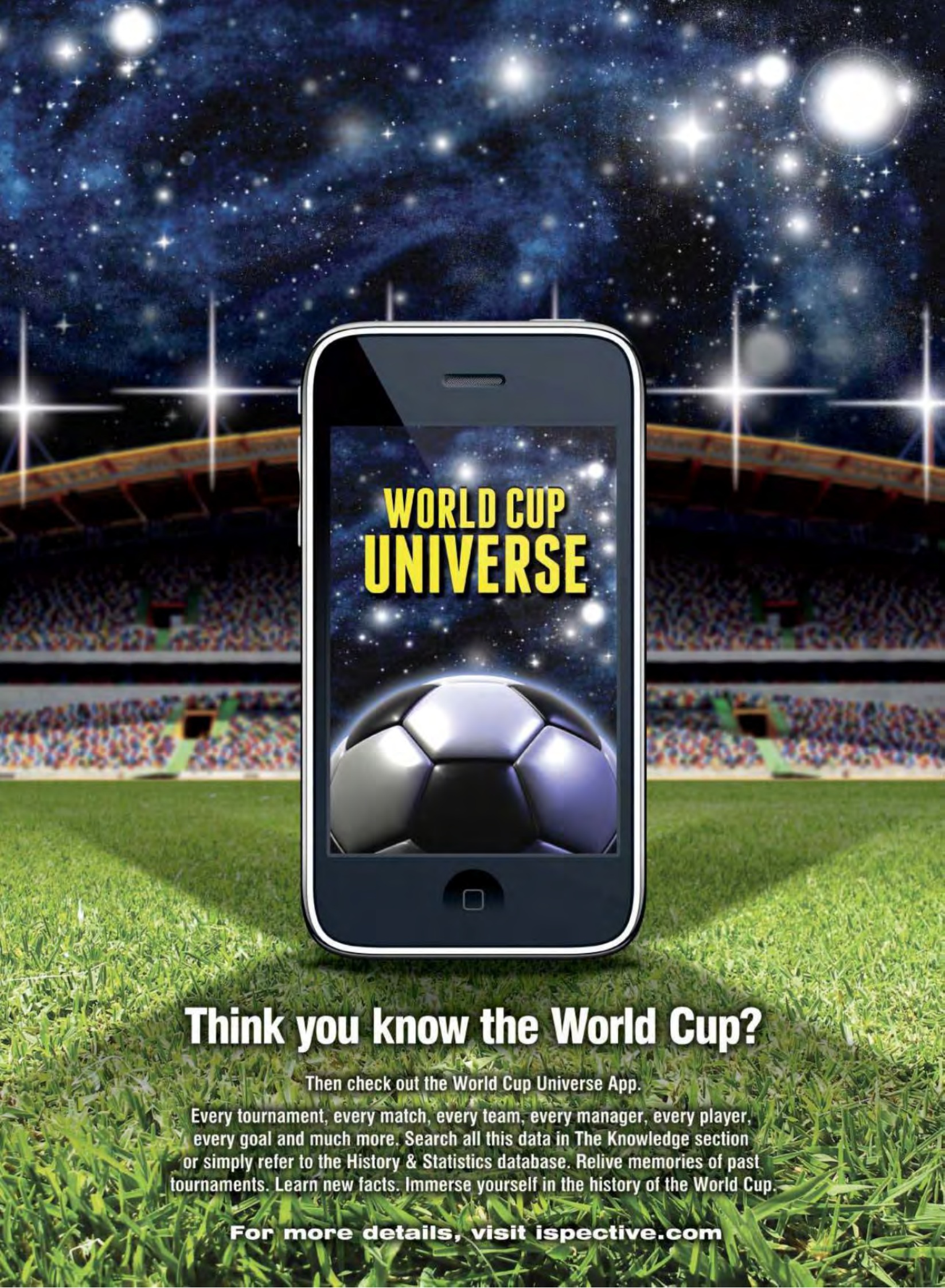
They held the lead only six minutes before Bobby Zamora bulldozed his way across the penalty box and Damien Duff gave Gera the chance to cross to the far post. The ball clipped the top of Paulo Assuncao's head and fell perfectly for Simon Davies to smash home.

Zamora, having contributed bravely in defiance of a long-standing Achilles injury, was replaced by Clint Dempsey 10 minutes into the second half.

Fulham were now playing with greater aggression and confidence, and breaking up Atletico's neat passing patterns. For a spell they looked the more threatening. A Davies snap-shot forced an equally alert save from keeper David De Gea but the departure of half-fit Zamora blunted the Londoners' attack.

There was no reprieve in extra time and, in the 116th minute, Aguero wriggled in from the left and Forlan deftly flicked home his low cross.

The Uruguayan, Atletico's away-goal hero of their semi-final success against Liverpool, had once more proved himself better late than anyone else. ●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Xavi SPAIN

DO YOU SEE this World Cup as a major landmark?
This will be my third World Cup and I'm genuinely determined to make the most of it. Obviously, it takes a miracle for any player to play in four and, to be honest, I don't think I'll manage that. So I'm approaching this tournament full of expectations, especially as it comes at a time when I'm enjoying one of the best moments in my career.

Do those expectations extend as far as winning the trophy?
As I've said before, we have to be realistic. Spain has never been a favourite at the World Cup. However, we go into this one as champions of Europe – that is a hard fact, and a compelling argument in our favour, but, having said that, the World Cup is very different. I have said many times teams like Brazil, Argentina and Italy will start with an advantage, as they have won many World Cups and they all have squads that are familiar with success at the highest level. Our challenge is to live up to the expectations, but we need to keep in mind that other teams are the favourites.

Can you remember the last time you missed a pass?
The truth is that I don't keep track. Clearly, one of my qualities on the pitch is that I don't lose the ball very often, but it does happen sometimes. I try not to take risks though. In my position, losing the ball can be fatal as the other team can break on the counter-attack. Obviously keeping hold of the ball is one of my best qualities and I try to make the most of it, but that is not what wins you the game – you need to be able to seek out options and make the most of opportunities.

> **"I am a football anorak and I like studying and analysing all aspects because I do not like leaving anything to chance"**

You seem to be able to control the game, not just of your team but also of your opponents. Do you spend a lot of time analysing the way the other team plays or does it all just come naturally?
Behind the team on the pitch there are people who spend hours and hours working on this, recording and analysing the opposition teams in order to make our job easier. I am a passionate football anorak and I like studying and analysing all aspects because I do not like leaving anything to chance. Some team-mates are more intuitive but I like to know my rival. Pep [Guardiola, Barcelona's coach] is also obsessed with tactics, though he always leaves room for imagination and talent to play their part.

Who has been the greatest influence on your game?
Believe it or not, it was Pep Guardiola. I had a youth coach called Joan Vila, who was very important to my career development; he always put up Pep as an example, to the point that he made me go to the stadium every weekend to watch him and try to imitate his style of play. Pep was my inspiration and I learned a lot from the way he moved about the pitch, his vision of the game and his leadership skills.

The fitness of your midfield partner Andres Iniesta is still a concern. How important is he to Barca and Spain?
He's doing very well. It's true that this season has not been the best for him because he spent so much of it out injured. But now he has recovered his smile, he is excited – and with Iniesta on the pitch, we are always a better team for it.

What do you make of your new Barca team-mate David Villa?
When he was with Valencia we had a perfect understanding on the pitch for Spain, so I hope it's not going to start going wrong now he's joined us! It's very easy to play with David because he is so fast and alert in the box.

Do Spain and Barcelona play a similar style of football?
Well, when you have eight players from Barcelona in the national squad it makes it easier to find a rhythm. The national team likes to play the ball, tries to set the tempo and likes to keep possession. Those are also the three pillars of the game we play at Barcelona.

Are there similarities between Spain coach Vicente Del Bosque and Guardiola?
More than most people think. They like their teams to play an attacking game and to keep possession, and both know how to motivate players.

Interview by Dan Brennan

Dani Alves BRAZIL

YOU PLAY in Spain and for Brazil – the favourites for the World Cup. Have you been winding up your Barcelona team-mates...
Of course. Hopefully we'll meet as late as possible so that one of us doesn't have to return early. If we have to play each other, I'd love it to be at the very end of the tournament. Spain has a brilliant level of play, but at the World Cup you have got to have more than wonderful football to win it. Brazil has something that Spain has not got.

What? And can Brazil win the tournament?
That feeling, that sense of knowing what it takes. Brazil have won it five times, Spain have never won it. You learn from that. In that sense, Brazil is a mature team with clear ideas; Spain still might not be. In the World Cup, it's just not good enough to play well, you have to know how to compete, you need confidence. If we prepare well, we have a really good chance. It's very important for Brazil. But of course you need a bit of luck too.

And you've got Jogo Bonito...
When Nike did the thing about Jogo Bonito with Brazil, it wasn't cynical. That is the way we see football. That's why I have never played up front: I don't need to. We enjoy ourselves on all parts of the pitch; we enjoy bringing the ball out from the back and we take risks. You don't achieve anything without taking risks. In Europe you go from the back to the front and the forwards end every move. In Brazil, we all attack and defend.

And yet it looks like Dunga will play Maicon ahead of you. Some say it's for precisely that reason; that Maicon defends better...
When I am attacking I am defending. When you put pressure on the other team high up the pitch you are keeping them a long way from your goal. That's defending well. The further from the goal you defend, the better. That suits me – and it's the style that Barcelona play. If you don't take a chance then you are just another team who doesn't get anywhere. I've become a better player with Pep Guardiola at Barcelona too. I've learnt to position myself better without the ball.

You're fiercely competitive, some would say overly so. Is your philosophy to win at all costs?
I like to enjoy myself and winning at all costs is the ugly side of football. But I'm not a player who would ever say: "Well, if you win, you win; if you lose, you lose." Winning is what really matters. If you don't win, things don't make sense. I have a lot of energy and I never stop – people have to stop me sometimes. I'm two different people: one person on the pitch and another off it. When I see myself on the television I don't recognise myself. I'm a relaxed person and it takes a lot to get me angry. But when I go on the pitch I change. I'm intense. I'm passionate about what I do.

"Playing for Brazil is like a homecoming. We get on very well. It's like a party"

How do you feel about probably losing out to Maicon?
Fine. It's very difficult in the Brazil team; you have the best but you can't put them all on the pitch at the same time. The coach has to decide. As a player, you just have to accept that and be prepared when you are called upon. Dunga has been a player and knows us. He knows what we like and what we don't, how best to handle us.

What's the hardest thing for a player at the World Cup?
The key is putting up with each other for that length of time. It can feel like a very long time. You have to find things to do. If not, you get bored. You have to be careful not to lose concentration or lose sight of the objective. And that is one of the reasons why Brazil have an advantage. Because most of us play at clubs across Europe it's like a homecoming. We get on very well. It's like a party.

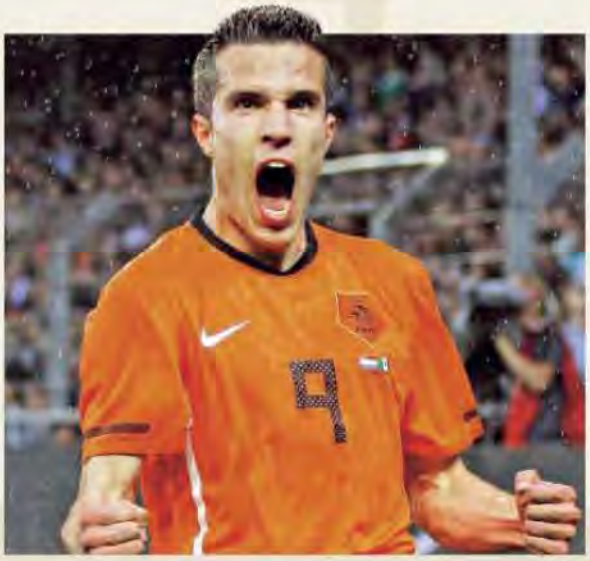
Club-mates but World Cup rivals... Dani Alves and Xavi

So being a diaspora team is an advantage?
Yes. You get more enjoyment. You don't have the same closeness in European teams. It really feels special when I go back and see the Brazilian players. There are always smiles and laughs. I wish I could be as happy as that every day.

Which players make that time together most enjoyable?
Robinho is always joking, messing about, doing stupid things – he makes you laugh loads and he never stops talking. Gilberto Silva is very, very, bright and probably the calmest member of the squad. Kaka is intelligent and very important off the pitch. My best friends are my former Sevilla team-mates Julio Baptista and Luis Fabiano. Me and Julio always share a room but we spend most of our time as a whole group.

Interview by Sid Lowe

Robin Van Persie HOLLAND



HOW WOULD you describe the atmosphere in the Dutch camp?
Really good. I really enjoy meeting up with this Dutch team. Not only Arjen [Robben] and Wesley [Sneijder], but also Rafael [Van der Vaart] and "Ibi" [Ibrahim Afellay]. We all get on tremendously. We're good players with a connection with each other. I enjoy the interaction of the front four. You feel as a striker you can get every ball. We are all a lot older and more experienced than two years ago at the European Championship. Everyone now has a big role at his club and he brings that to the national side.

How big a blow was your injury?
A major blow. This season I was ready to take things to the next level. You wonder if you could have prevented it. These tackles happen a hundred times in training. I was just unlucky.

Was is frustrating being sidelined?
At home I had a great time. I was able to do many more things with my son and my daughter, who I bottle fed. But I'm a footballer, so after a while it starts to itch. If you're away for more than two months, it sucks.

We're older and wiser

Are you no longer a number 10?
No. Arsene Wenger played me for four years as number 10 but said: "You're always in a hurry." The "tip" position is a little different to the number 10. I am now 15 metres higher up the pitch.

So are you now a typical goalscorer?
I do not necessarily score goals. With Arsenal, Wenger says that if we win 10 times but I do not score, he will keep me in the team. With Holland we have plenty of other players who can score.

So was it hard when you eventually got back into training?
Actually, no. I compare being injured to a singer who has not sung for a year. Get him singing for five minutes and he can do it again. It's the same with the ball if you're a footballer.

Javier Mascherano ARGENTINA

WHY DID Argentina struggle to qualify for the World Cup?
I do feel the team was undergoing a process of renewal and change during the qualifying campaign and I think that contributed to us struggling. Each time we took to the field to play, we were anxious about reaching the finals so the pressure was huge. Argentina with no World Cup would have been a disaster for the country. Qualifying by any means became our only priority.

The players were heavily criticised in the qualifiers. Was that justified?
We all accept criticism when it is about football issues, but we got upset when it got personal and untruthful. It was said that the Argentinians who play in Europe, like myself, were not eager to play for the national team. That was unacceptable and hurtful. There were also alleged problems between certain players in the camp, but again that was false. We can take criticism, but I also believe that when faced by such tough moments the team improved.

Argentina have not won a major trophy since the Copa America in 1993. Why has it been so long?
It's hard to explain. We've had good teams but things haven't always gone our way. Argentinian football has had much success at junior levels recently but we haven't translated this to senior level. Several formations and coaches have been tested, but unfortunately we have felt frustrated for a long time.

Describe the experience of playing for Diego Maradona?
He gives us a simple message and, importantly, he asks players to play in the positions and in the style which we are familiar with at our clubs. His idea of how he wants to play the game is always clear – there's no confusion.

Maradona's passion burns bright

His passion for the team and the success of Argentinian football burns bright. He's the most important player to ever represent Argentina and his performances speak for themselves.

How has your game and style of play changed since you arrived in England?
I already had a reputation as a physical

Fabio Cannavaro

ITALY

So how do you feel?
Good. I know more about my body. An Arsenal physio used to say which muscles to stretch. I've investigated a bit, though, and found that in training you already stretch muscles when you are constantly running and sprinting. So after training I'm keen not to stretch more than I have to, and I've noticed that I've had faster recovery than before. Mentally I'm as fresh as I feel. Other guys have played 50 or 60 games and are perhaps tired after a long season. But I am very excited.

So you're ready for the World Cup?
I'm looking forward to at least three games, hopefully seven. In the two tournaments that I've played so far [2006 World Cup and Euro 2008], every game has the atmosphere of a Champions League Final. Millions of Dutch people are watching you – and for a few weeks we'll determine how happy or sad they are. I look forward to playing under that sort of pressure.

Interview by Bas Abresch/ESM

player but even I had to adapt to a faster, more dynamic style in England. I feel my style suits the Premier League well, but there is more running than perhaps in any other country. In the Premier League, there's a big emphasis on recovering the ball when it is lost because the action is so fast and that means there will always be a role for a player like myself who is willing to tackle and compete for the ball.

How difficult is it to build a successful international side from a set of players who play in many different countries?
It's difficult and a constant challenge as we usually meet for an international fixture just 48 hours beforehand. We have many things to work on before a match and so little time to prepare properly. But we are at peace with the situation now that we've qualified for the World Cup as we will have much more time together in the summer before the tournament begins. For now, the pressure has been released.

Interview by Miguel Bossio

"We cannot afford any mistakes"

BRAZIL WERE the last side to successfully defend the trophy back in 1962. Do you agree it is harder to win the World Cup the second time around?
Retaining the World Cup is undoubtedly the toughest mission. When you go into the tournament as the reigning champions you have all eyes on you and that increases the pressure. On the pitch, every team you face raises their game because they know you are the champions and they are desperate to be remembered as the side which beat the World Cup holders. They want to write their own chapter of football history, but we expect this and we will be ready.

Which teams do you think will be the biggest dangers to Italy in South Africa?
Spain, England and Brazil are the teams I believe will be the strongest. Spain showed at Euro 2008 that they are a side with great talent and vision, and Brazil are always a team that is dangerous at the World Cup. England have some great players and in Fabio Capello they have one of football's great managers.

How does the current Italy side compare to the one that beat France four years ago?
Of course, there have been some changes since 2006, but the spine of the team has remained intact and I believe we will be strong again. It is inevitable that the squad will alter between tournaments, but the fact we were required to play qualifying matches means we have a settled team that is accustomed to each other.

What is the recipe for a successful tournament?
As I have said, you have to be focused from the first minute of the first game. You cannot afford any lapses. It is all about concentration because, on a stage such as the World Cup, one little mistake can cost you the match. It is a gathering of the best players in the world and, if you are not concentrated, you will be punished.

What is Italy's great strength as you prepare for the finals?
I would say it is our unity and compactness. We have talented players, we have a great manager and we have the experience of lifting the trophy four years ago. But I believe it is the togetherness of the Italy squad that will be the foundation on which we build in South Africa. Any team that dreams of success must have unity. We had it in 2006 and we have it again.

Which sides do you see as the dark horses of the tournament?
Both Serbia and Ghana could make a big impact. Serbia are technically very gifted and finished above France in qualifying, while Ghana are a very exciting team who reached the Final in the African Nations Cup.

How significant do you think the mild weather will be during the tournament?
It could be a big factor during the competition. They say the weather will be akin to a European autumn and that will certainly suit all the European teams who traditionally do not like to play in very hot conditions.

Interview by Lorenzo Zacchetti

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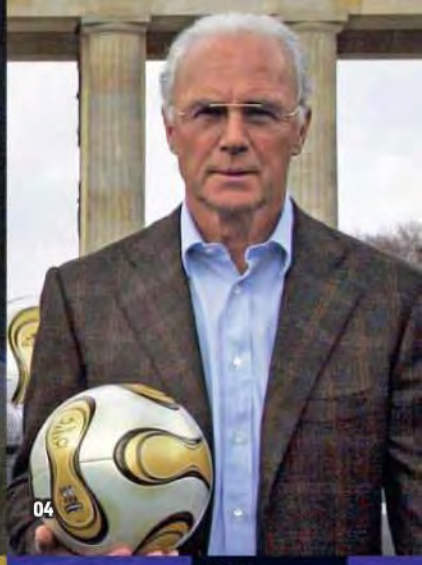
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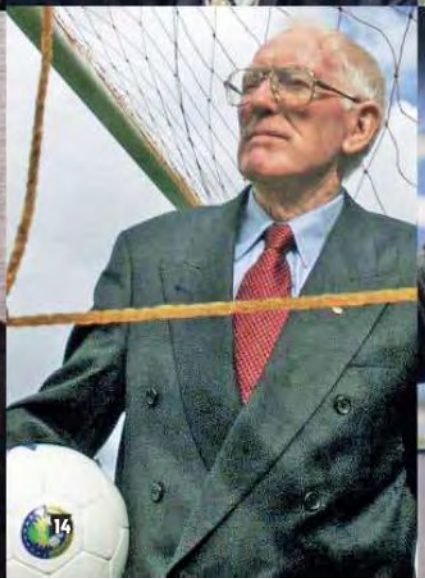
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50 PEOPLE WHO CHANGED THE GAME

To celebrate *World Soccer*'s 50th anniversary, we select those who have helped to shape the sport Words: Duncan Bond

Roman ABRAMOVICH

One of the world's richest men, he has been the owner of Chelsea since 2003. He has also bankrolled the Russia national team.
In September 2003 issue of World Soccer, Gavin Hamilton reported: "There is nothing deceptive about the millions lashed out by Abramovich [to buy Chelsea]. His investment – 'for as long as it takes,' he says – could turn out to be one of the most significant developments in the history of the game."

Gerhard AIGNER

Served as general secretary for UEFA for 10 years, from 1989, and then as chief executive until 2003.
In November 2002 issue of World Soccer, Aigner told Keir Radnedge when asked about the threat of the top clubs forming a European league: "You cannot allow the top level of the game to run out of control. You have to try to keep it under control and maintain sporting values as best you can. The Bosman decision was an almost fatal blow because it triggered all these crazy ideas among the clubs of buying up all the best players and creating super leagues and so on."

KEY:
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16 GEORGE EASTHAM

Gianni AGNELLI

Distinctive figurehead of Juventus and the club's honorary president until he died in 2003, Agnelli became synonymous with his 7am phone calls to star players on the Monday after a game. He grew up watching John Charles and Omar Sivori play for Juve and was instrumental in signing Michel Platini for the club in the 1980s.
In March 2003 edition of World Soccer, Paddy Agnew wrote: "Agnelli was once asked what could possibly make him a happier person, given that as a tycoon born into a semi-aristocratic dynasty he seemed to already have everything. 'Just let me watch Platini play for 10 minutes,' came the answer."

Franz BECKENBAUER

Following a successful playing and coaching career, he became Bayern Munich president, before serving as vice-president of the German FA. He then became chairman and figurehead of the 2006 World Cup organising committee.
In September 2005 issue of World Soccer he told Keir Radnedge: "For two months Germany will be the centre of world attention so the World Cup represents major opportunities for our country. We must take advantage so that this World Cup leaves a sporting, cultural and commercial legacy that can be felt for another 50 years."

Silvio BERLUSCONI

Berlusconi was president of Milan from 1986 to 2008 and is now the prime minister of Italy. He was at the helm of the Milanese club during their golden era of the early 1990s and a strong advocate of a European super league.

In May 1992 issue of World Soccer, he told Keir Radnedge: "The European cups [European Cup, Cup-winners Cup and UEFA Cup] have become a historical anachronism. It's economic nonsense that a club such as Milan might be eliminated in the first round. A European Cup that lasts the whole season is what Europe wants. After all, Europe wanted an economic community, with monetary union and a customs union. It's inevitable it should want a football union too."

Santiago BERNABEU

Five years prior to *World Soccer*'s first publication, Santiago Bernabeu was one of the pioneers who helped create the European Cup. His influence and standing in the game was enormous and he was president of Real Madrid for 35 years.

In May 1968 issue of World Soccer, Keir Radnedge reported on the club's annual general meeting where Bernabeu said: "I have been re-elected president for what will be my 25th year. Next year it will be necessary for you all to elect a new president to succeed me. Someone else must be elected, though I shall of course be always ready to help if needed. I repeat, you will have to elect a new president." Of course they didn't and Bernabeu served another 10 years until his death in 1978.

Mohamed BIN HAMMAM

The current president of the Asian Football Confederation, he has been on the FIFA executive committee since 1996. Launched the AFC Champions League in 2003.

Sepp BLATTER

Succeeded Joao Havelange as FIFA president in 1998. Prior to that, he held the position of general secretary (1981 to 1998) and technical director (1975 to 1981).

In January 2000 edition of World Soccer, Blatter told Keir Radnedge: "We must be careful that our game is not taken over by the TV companies, their advertisers and sponsors. We want football to be in the hands of football people. We need the money but we need it to trickle down from top to bottom to be used for the [football] education of our young people."

Chuck BLAZER

General secretary of CONCACAF and also serves on the FIFA executive committee. He was significant in taking the World Cup finals to USA in 1994.

Jean-Marc BOSMAN

The player who shook up and changed the transfer system in football. The European court ruled that he was free to change clubs, without a transfer fee changing hands, when his contract with RFC Liege had expired, opening the door for players of today to negotiate signing-on fees and astronomical wages. Bosman later retired from the game virtually broke.

When asked in the February 1997 edition of World Soccer if he was bitter that other players were getting rich thanks to him, Bosman told Rino Landa: "I wouldn't go that far but I haven't had one letter of thanks from any player nor from any of the presidents of all the clubs who have cashed in on the consequences of my court case."

Harry CAVAN

The Northern Irishman was a hugely influential administrator both with the Irish FA (whom he served as president from 1958 to 1994) and FIFA, with whom he was involved from 1960 to 1990. Cavan was senior vice-president of FIFA from 1980 to 1990 and was involved in the World Cup organising committees from 1970 to 1986.

CHUNG MONG-JOON

Shot to prominence in the mid-1990s when, as president of the South Korean FA, he not only secured an Asian place on the FIFA executive committee but also masterminded the late, late campaign that earned South Korea co-hosting rights with Japan to the 2002 World Cup.

Horst DASSLER

Son of the founder of Adidas, Adi Dassler, Horst was a sports marketing guru who, apart from setting up Adidas France and competing against his father and uncle (Rudolf, who ran Puma) was regarded, along with Patrick Nally, as being one of the founding fathers of sports sponsorship. Worked alongside FIFA's Joao Havelange in attracting blue-chip sponsors to football – and the World Cup in particular.

Charlie DEMPSEY

Born in Scotland in 1922, Dempsey emigrated to New Zealand 30 years later and was elected president of the Oceania Football Confederation in 1982. He also served on FIFA's executive committee. Hit the headlines when his voting abstention, going against OFC wishes, denied South Africa the hosting of the 2006 World Cup.

Brian Glanville wrote in August 2000 issue of World Soccer: "Charles Dempsey emerged from the 2006 World Cup voting as hero and saviour. In brief, a saviour from South Africa. The motives for his crucial abstention clearly had nothing to do with any kind of bribery. The idea of South Africa – a country of 60,000 murders a year and rising – putting on a World Cup freezes the blood."

Alfredo DI STEFANO

Moved into management when his playing days finished and is now a figurehead for Real Madrid, with whom he was named President of Honour in 2000.

In February 2004 edition of World Soccer, when talking about how difficult it would be to win five consecutive European Cups (as Real Madrid did in the early 1960s), Di Stefano said: "If anything, it was more difficult then, because the tournament was run on a knockout system. Now, even if you lose two matches, you can still go through. In our day, if you lost one round, you were out."

> **"The thought of South Africa putting on a World Cup freezes the blood"**
>
> *Brian Glanville, writing in World Soccer in 2000, about Charlie Dempsey's decision to vote against South Africa's hosting of the 2006 World Cup*

George EASTHAM

A former England international, Eastham was a transfer pioneer, pre-Bosman. His move from Newcastle United to Arsenal, via the High Court, was the catalyst to change the then retain-and-transfer system, thus enabling players the freedom to move between clubs, despite being under contract.

Artemio FRANCHI

UEFA president from 1972 to 1983. He also had two spells as the president of the Italian Football Federation (from 1967 to 1976 and 1978 to 1980) and served on the FIFA executive committee from 1974 until he died in 1983 following a road accident near Siena.

Jacques GEORGES

The Frenchman was the fourth president of UEFA, succeeding Artemio Franchi, and served from 1983 to 1990. Before that he was president of the French Football Federation from 1969 to 1972. As UEFA president one of his first duties was to present fellow Frenchman Michel Platini with the Henri Delaunay trophy for winning the European Championships in 1984. One year on, his joy turned to despair as he presided over the Heysel tragedy. He was heavily criticised for allowing the match to be played in the aftermath of 39 people losing their lives.

Jesus GIL

A controversial former president of Atletico Madrid and right-wing politician, Gil hit the headlines several times during his 15-year tenure as club president. He was notable for changing managers at his club 40 times in those 15 years – employing six different coaches in 1993 alone. Gil was continually in trouble with the law and twice served prison sentences, latterly after he committed financial irregularities in 1992 when Atletico became a public company. He died in 2002.

Julio GRONDONA

Now in his 31st year as president of the Argentinian Football Association, Grondona has presided over a very successful era. Taking charge a year after they first won the World Cup (on home soil in 1978), he saw Argentina crowned world champions for a second time in 1986 and then finish as runners-up four years later. In his three decades in charge, Argentina have also won the Copa America twice, Olympic gold twice and the Under-20 World Championship six times.

KEY

01 JACQUES GEORGES
02 JESUS GIL
03 JULIO GRONDONA
04 JOAO HAVELANGE
05 ISSA HAYATOU
06 JIMMY HILL
07 ULI HOENESS
08 LENNART JOHANSSON
09 DANNY JORDAAN
10 LEO KIRCH
11 THOMAS KURTH
12 NICOLAS LEOZ
13 MASSIMO MORATTI
14 RUPERT MURDOCH
15 HERMANN NEUBERGER
16 PELE

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Joao HAVELANGE

Brazil-born Havelange's tenure as FIFA president stretched from 1974 to 1998 and he oversaw the expansion of the World Cup from 16 teams to the current 32, the start of World Cups at under-17 and under-20 level, and the introduction of the Women's World Cup and the Confederations Cup.
In 1994 he endured an acrimonious row with Pele, who had accused the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) of financial irregularities. CBF president at the time, Ricardo Teixeira, was Havelange's son-in-law. Havelange, explaining his decision to ban Pele from the 1994 World Cup draw in Las Vegas, told World Soccer in July 1994: "Look, when I was a boy my father used to slap me if I had been disrespectful. That is what I did metaphorically to Pele. He must learn to show respect. I launched Pele in the Brazil national team when he was only 17. I have always protected him and treated him like a son."

Issa HAYATOU

A former PE teacher from the Cameroon, Hayatou has been president of CAF since 1987 and is also a vice-president of FIFA.
In May 2002 issue of World Soccer, when asked about the stance taken by European clubs regarding the release of African players for national duty, he told Keir Radnedge: "I find it appalling. Some clubs are guilty of bad faith. I know that some players are told that a renewal of their contract depends on them refusing to go to the [African] Nations Cup."

Jimmy HILL

Manager of Coventry City and then a TV presenter and pundit, he is most famed for his campaign – in the twilight of his playing career at Fulham – to have the maximum wage of £20 a week abolished in the Football League. This he achieved in January 1961, thus allowing team-mate Johnny Haynes to become the first £100-a-week earner in the English game.

Uli HOENESS

A World Cup winner with West Germany in 1974 and a stalwart of the Bayern Munich side from the same era, on retirement Hoeness remained at the club as general manager and later president. During that time, Bayern have maintained their domination of German football. No shrinking violet, in the past he has criticised English football, UEFA appointments and FIFA's choice of South Africa as World Cup hosts to name but a few topics.

Lennart JOHANSSON

Became chairman of the Swedish FA in 1976 and rose to president eight years later. Johansson became UEFA's fifth president in 1990 and served for 17 years before giving way to Michel Platini.
In May 1998 issue of World Soccer he told Keir Radnedge: "I am extremely worried whenever managers, players, coaches and referees are accused of accepting or offering bribes. We must be seen to act quickly. We must not only preach about fair play, we must see to it that everyone in football knows it pays to behave, and if you don't behave you pay for it."

"Look, when I was a boy my father used to slap me if I had been disrespectful. That is what I did metaphorically to Pele"

Joao Havelange tells World Soccer why he banned Pele from the 1994 World Cup draw

KEY
01 FLORENTINO PEREZ
02 MICHEL PLATINI
03 STANLEY ROUS
04 KARL-HEINZ RUMMENIGGE
05 RAIMUNDO SAPORTA
06 RICHARD SCUDAMORE
07 BERNARD TAPIE
08 GORDON TAYLOR
09 RICARDO TEIXEIRA
10 JEROME VALCKE
11 MICHAEL VAN PRAAG
12 PETER VELAPPAN
13 JACK WARNER
14 GUSTAV WIEDERKEHR
15 PHIL WOOSNAM
16 MICHEL ZEN-RUFFINEN

Danny JORDAAN

Mastermind of the South African bid to host Africa's first World Cup. Jordaan was also involved in South African politics and was a prominent anti-apartheid activist.
In November 2003 edition of World Soccer he told Keir Radnedge: "We don't have to convince the world why coming to Africa is such a great idea. Economically, South Africa is by far the biggest country in Africa and, in my opinion, Africa's best prospect for a successful World Cup."

Leo KIRCH

German media mogul who, in 1996, bought the TV rights to the 2002 and 2006 World Cups at a time when FIFA were attempting to maximise their commercial revenue. His hope was to make a fortune out of western European countries paying a hefty market price in order to ward off the challenge of pay-TV. But FIFA, who had maintained the right of veto, ensured key matches would be available to terrestrial TV companies, cutting the ground from beneath Kirch's feet. The TV companies refused to pay the asking price and in 2002 KirchMedia declared itself insolvent.

Thomas KURTH

General manager of the G-14 group of European clubs set up in 2000 to take on the establishment. Kurth's aim was to get a better deal for the clubs by bargaining with international associations, FIFA and UEFA.

Nicolas LEOZ

The Paraguayan has been president of CONMEBOL for the past 24 years. He was club president of Libertad from 1969 to 1970 and from 1974 to 1977, president of the Paraguayan FA (1971 to 1973 and 1979 to 1985) and was a vice-president of CONMEBOL (from 1972 to 1974 and again from 1980 to 1986).

Massimo MORATTI

President of Internazionale since 1995, billionaire Moratti finally achieved his goal of winning the Champions League this season. He has also presided over five successive Serie A titles since 2006, but has spent millions of his oil fortune to achieve his ambitions. His father, Angelo, was a previous Inter president.

Rupert MURDOCH

The Australian media mogul transformed English football when his BSkyB television network purchased the rights to the Premier League. When the Premier League tendered their television rights back in 1992, Murdoch outbid ITV (who had courted the big five teams of that era) with a late offer and the backing of the smaller clubs in the top flight. Murdoch's cash enabled English Premier League clubs to bid for the world's best players and pay the high salaries they demanded.

Patrick NALLY

One of the pioneers of sports marketing, he held the marketing rights to the World Cups of 1978, 1982 and 1986. He has also been active in the development of grass roots football worldwide. He helped set up the General Association of International Sports Federations in the late 1960s, and has been synonymous with helping and securing sponsorship contracts for the International Olympic Committee and Commonwealth Games since 1976.

Hermann NEUBERGER

A figure of controversy who was, from 1975 to his death in 1992, president of the German Football association.
He was also a FIFA vice-president and, according to World Soccer's Brian Glanville in November 1992, he had a notorious past: "Hermann Neuberger has gone, leaving behind him a mystery. What did he do in Rome during the war? The rumour had long been that he had been a member of the SS. Eventually I asked the well-informed Horst Dassler, mentor of Adidas, whether this was true. Horst said: 'He was in charge of reprisals against partisans.' Most of us know what that meant, even if I had no evidence to suggest that Neuberger was in any way involved with the massacre of the Fosse Ardeatine, when over 300 innocent hostages were shot as a reprisal for a bomb attack on an SS patrol in Rome. I suppose the ultimate irony was that Neuberger should be put in charge of the World Cup [as a member of the FIFA organising committee], when it took place in Italy in 1990, with the Final in Rome."

PELE

Arguably the greatest player of all time, Pele retired in 1977 but is still active in football circles, though more commercially for sponsors than in an administrative way.
In August 1992 issue of World Soccer, Keir Radnedge asked him about why he did not play in a fifth World Cup finals in 1974. Pele revealed: "I was playing for Santos, we won the Sao Paulo championship and I was leading scorer only a few months before the World Cup, but Brazil had a military government and they were forcing people to do what they did not want to do. I did not accept that. I knew that if we did well in the World Cup, attention would be focused on the team and people would forget the things that were happening in Brazil. I stayed out as a protest."

Florentino PEREZ

President of Real Madrid since 2009, he held the same office from 2000 to 2006. In that time he launched the galactico era at the Bernabeu in the hope of dominating European club football.
In April 2002 issue of World Soccer, he told

Keir Radnedge: "If I had to choose one [favourite player] then that would have to be Alfredo Di Stefano. People quote me the money we have spent on Luis Figo and Zinedine Zidane and then ask how much a Di Stefano would be worth today. It's impossible even to put a value on what he was and what he achieved. He, more than anyone else, represents the living history of this club."

Michel PLATINI

A superstar of French football, Platini is now president of UEFA. He also worked for FIFA and helped organise the 1998 World Cup in his French homeland.

In December 2006 issue of World Soccer, shortly before he was elected UEFA president, Platini told Keir Radnedge: "I see one big problem [with the Champions League]. There are not enough national champions among the 32 clubs in the group stage. I think four clubs for the biggest countries is one too many. It squeezes out other countries and other clubs. The biggest countries – England, Italy, Spain – should have a maximum of three clubs. Of course even if I became president I could not dictate this change because we have committees to decide but that would be my idea."

Stanley ROUS

Served as president of FIFA for 13 years from 1961 to 1974. Rous was previously a top referee before becoming secretary of the Football Association in England. In 1938 he helped re-write the laws of the game. His presidency of FIFA coincided with England winning the World Cup in 1966, but throughout his tenure Rous was staunchly pro-European. He was reluctant to concede more places to African countries and that stance eventually led to his loss of the presidency to Joao Havelange in 1974.

Karl-Heinz RUMMENIGGE

Former Bayern Munich and Germany captain who has made the adjustment to football administration with ease, in his position as vice-president of his former club. Also became a leading spokesman for the G-14 group of European clubs.

In November 2001 issue of World Soccer he told Gavin Hamilton: "The small countries enter [the UEFA Cup] only because of the money from TV rights. The big country clubs should limit themselves to playing in an elite competition, the Champions League. The UEFA Cup is, after all, for losers."

Raimundo SAPORTA

A top basketball administrator who became Real Madrid club secretary in the late 50s and early 60s. He was described by former president Lorenzo Sanz as "the most important man, after Bernabeu, in the club's history".

Richard SCUDAMORE

In 1999 Scudamore became CEO of the Premier League in England. Since then he has been responsible for negotiating broadcasting and sponsorship contracts worth millions of pounds, thus enabling the Premier League to become the richest league in the world.

Bernard TAPIE

A French businessman and politician, Tapie was president of Marseille from 1986 to 1994, during which time they become the only French club to win the Champions League. Was brought down to earth when a combination of financial irregularities and match-fixing accusations saw him imprisoned and Marseille relegated.

Gordon TAYLOR

One of the most influential people in English football, he has worked for the player's union (PFA) since 1980 and for many years has been its chief executive, reputedly the highest paid trade union leader in the country.

In July 2003 issue of World Soccer when talking to Keir Radnedge about the collapse of ITV Digital and its effects on Football League clubs, Taylor said: "A lot of people have made a lot of money out of football clubs in ways which have upset me. The PFA must have visited around 30 clubs where the chairman just disappeared and left us to pick up the pieces. And it was nothing to do with player's wages. If the players hadn't picked up another penny, the way those clubs were being run they'd have still ended up in thousands, even millions of debt."

Ricardo TEIXEIRA

The son-in-law of former FIFA president Joao Havelange, he became president of the Brazil Football Confederation (CBF) in 1989. For years he ruled with an iron fist and kept CBF affairs shrouded in mystery, declaring the federation was a "private entity". He was involved in a personal battle with Pele whom he frequently criticised, but has tried to re-invent his image in recent years. Helped to take the 2014 World Cup to Brazil and also assisted with Rio do Janeiro's successful bid to host the 2016 Olympics.

In April 2001, he told World Soccer's Brian Homewood: "I have reviewed some of my concepts. One of the most important revisions was to recognise I was very wrong to distance the organisation which presides over Brazilian football from its greatest exponent, Edson Arantes do Nascimento – Pele."

Jerome VALCKE

FIFA general secretary since 2007, he joined the organisation as director of marketing and TV four years previously, having worked for French broadcasters Canal+ and Sport+. Instrumental in preparations for the 2010 World Cup.

Michael VAN PRAAG

Current chairman of the Holland/Belgium World Cup bid for 2018, Van Praag began his football career as a referee between 1972 and 1988. He then became chairman of Ajax from 1989 to 2003, and since 2008 has been chairman of the Dutch FA. In March last year he was elected to UEFA's Executive committee.

Peter VELAPPAN

Having joined the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) in 1954, Velappan served as its secretary general from 1978 until he retired in 2007. When he first joined the AFC there were only 12 countries in the confederation; when he retired, there were more than 45. Was also an influential figure when Japan and South Korea hosted the 2002 World Cup.

In November 2001 issue of World Soccer he told Keir Radnedge: "Hosting the World Cup will be a tremendous boost for Asian football. This continent has 60 per cent of the world's population; the potential for growth is enormous."

Jack WARNER

One of football's most controversial men, Warner is an executive of the Trinidad & Tobago Football Association, FIFA vice-president and president of the CONCACAF federation. He notably came to prominence when allocating all of Trinidad & Tobago's World Cup 2006 ticket allocation to a travel agency run by his family. Has often been courted by many a World Cup bidding nation for the block CONCACAF vote.

In May 2002 issue of World Soccer, he told Keir Radnedge: "Allowing the UK to have four national teams and four votes in FIFA is an absolute historical anachronism. Maybe the situation would have been a little different if David Will, the British vice-president on the FIFA executive, had been willing to stand aside for Geoff Thompson of the FA. That did not happen and I think it could have serious consequences."

> **"Allowing the UK to have four national teams and four votes in FIFA is an absolute historical anachronism"**
>
> *Jack Warner shares his views with World Soccer in 2002*

Gustav WIEDERKEHR

Born in Switzerland and served as president of UEFA from 1962 until his death in 1972, aged 66.

Phil WOOSNAM

Following a playing career with West Ham United, Woosnam emigrated to the United States in 1966. In 1968 he was coach of the USA national side. Following that he became commissioner of the NASL and was credited as the man who made football take off on the other side of the Atlantic. However, he wanted the league to expand too quickly and NASL imploded. Woosnam later became involved with the marketing arm of US Soccer.

Michel ZEN-RUFFINEN

A former ref who served as FIFA general secretary for four years from 1998, but stepped down after losing a power struggle with Sepp Blatter after he accused the FIFA president of mismanaging finances.

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SIX OF THE BEST LEAGUE

Tom DE SUTTER
ANDERLECHT

TO all intents and purposes, this season was not kind to the 24-year-old Anderlecht target man. He lost his first-team spot to teenage sensation Romelu Lukaku, started relatively few league games and then missed the last few weeks of the campaign after damaging cartilage in his knee.

But despite all his troubles, De Sutter still managed to finish as the Brussels club's fourth-highest scorer and, whenever on the pitch, he showed plenty of heart, durability and self-sacrifice.

He has the potential to be a fine attacking pivot, both a nuisance thanks to his stature and very adept at holding the ball up. What he needs more than anything else is patience, and it should be remembered that just three years ago he was at third division Torhout, only joining Anderlecht in January 2009 from Cercle Brugge.

The 16 goals he scored in 2008-09 – seven for Cercle and nine for Anderlecht – are a sure indicator of his quality, as are his 14 caps for Belgium. Aware that he may be unsettled by a lack of playing time, Galatasaray are just one of several clubs rumoured to be ready to splash out £6million for him.

DOUGLAS
TWENTE

AS Twente marched resolutely towards their first-ever Eredivisie crown, it was inevitable that the Dutch media would only have eyes for the outstanding front-line triumvirate of Miroslav Stoch, Bryan Ruiz and Blaise Nkufo. But champions are not fashioned from cutting edge alone and in the 22-year-old Brazilian, the *Tukkers* – which is slang for people from the Enschede region of eastern Holland – had the meanest, toughest, most effective centre-back in the entire league: a one-man citadel built to repel the invader.

No wonder clubs in Italy and England are said to be salivating over the prospect of recruiting him. A mixture of the composed and the intimidating, he barely put a foot wrong all season and clearly has no sympathy for the poor strikers he dominates.

However, news of his success in Europe will have come as something of a shock to Brazil's football cognoscenti as, prior to leaving his homeland for Twente in 2007, he played in relative anonymity with third division Joinville, a club based in the southern state of Santa Catarina.

FABIO COENTRAO
BENFICA

AT long last this dynamic, left-sided midfielder is living up to the hype. Praised to the heavens as a teenager for his stylish work with Portugal Under-20s and second division Rio Ave, he found himself compared to such national greats as Luis Figo and Cristiano Ronaldo, and on signing for Benfica in 2007 it was widely assumed that he would become established in the first team in next to no time. How very wrong.

Benfica's coaches were of the opinion that he still had some maturing to do and for the next two years they farmed him out to Nacional in Madeira, Spanish side Zaragoza and back to Rio Ave. Only at the start of this season was the 22-year-old given the green light to wear the Benfica red and this time he truly was ready to launch, catching the eye with his energy, speed and crossing ability.

The cream had risen to the top and by the end of the year he was a full international. Under contract to Benfica until 2015, his release clause is a cool £30million, which may be slightly excessive...but not by much.

CHAMPIONS

Nick Bidwell looks at some of 2009-10's outstanding title-winning performers

Charles KABORE
MARSEILLE

IT takes one to know one and in his days as a world-class defensive midfielder for Marseille, Juventus and France, Didier Deschamps was a byword for reliability. So it should come as no surprise that, now coach of OM, Deschamps swears by the 22-year-old Burkina Faso international who is consistency personified as either an enforcer in midfield, at right-back or on the left flank.

Some players taking part in the African Nations Cup struggle for their best form on returning to the club grind, but Marseille's man never missed a beat when he came back from Angola earlier this year as his side set about securing their first title since 1992.

Essentially a no-frills figure, Kabore managed only one goal this season, but how important it was, helping OM to a vital 2-1 home win over Lyon.

"It's to my advantage that I can play in a number of positions," says the player who arrived at Marseille from second division Libourne in December 2007. "I like to keep it simple. Giving the ball away is a crime."

Sebastian LETO
PANATHINAIKOS

LEAGUE and cup doubles are becoming a speciality for the Argentinian left-winger who has completed a clean sweep with both Olympiakos and Panathinaikos in the last two seasons. There is, however, no doubt which side brought out the best in him.

While at Olympiakos – who he joined on a 12-month loan from Liverpool in August 2008 – Leto was widely criticised for his pedestrian play, lack of goals and clashes with authority. Since joining Panathinaikos in a £3million deal last summer, he has been a player transformed: calmer, more incisive and a far better finisher.

His excellent understanding with another club new boy, prolific French striker Djibril Cisse, laid the foundation for Panathinaikos' first league title in six years and the South American further enhanced his love-in with Greens fans by firing home the only goal of the game in the Cup Final victory over Aris.

During an unhappy spell in England – a period in which passport problems and the denial of a work permit restricted him to just a handful of starts for Liverpool – he was cast as a joke figure. Maybe it's time to reassess.

Mario MANDZUKIC
DINAMO ZAGREB

THE Croat game continues to show two distinct faces to the world: in one direction there is the endemic hooliganism and the unsavoury sight of Dinamo and Hajduk fans going on the rampage during and after a vital end-of-term encounter; the other way, a nation's extraordinary capacity to rear talent – the latest model being this Dinamo striker.

Without him, the Zagreb club simply would not have come close to clinching their fifth straight domestic league crown. Besides ending as his club's leading scorer, he also proved himself an excellent maker of chances, intelligently roaming across the front line and forever destabilising defences with his touch, vision and speed.

Whenever his team needed a spark, he was on hand to provide it. All told, he has been on target 40 times in the league since joining Dinamo from NK Zagreb three years ago.

Strange then that he still has his doubters, the critics who like to label him as too argumentative and sometimes lacking in focus – as seen in a Europa League loss to Anderlecht early this season when he was fined for a supposed sub-standard display.

BRAZIL

PAULO HENRIQUE GANSO

Santos playmaker on cusp of World Cup

TEAM-MATE Neymar (see Headliners, page 18) may have had the bigger media push, but it was Santos' Paulo Henrique Ganso who came closer to a World Cup after being placed on standby for the final 23.

Frequently compared with an older Santos favourite, Giovanni – who made his name with the club 15 years ago as a tall, elegant playmaker before moving on to Barcelona and Olympiakos – the 20-year-old they call "Ganso" ("goose") is from the same northern state of Para and looks like a left-footed version of the original, and it was Giovanni who first brought his protégé to Santos in 2005.

Ganso's big breakthrough came this year as the brains of a team which won the Sao Paulo state championship.

"He's a very intelligent player who dictates a strong rhythm although he's not particularly quick," says Santos coach Dorival Junior. "Paulo keeps the ball moving and passes very well.

"He's the kind of midfielder who is hard to find these days."

Ganso can pass with his right foot, but it is his ability to split open defences with his left that has attracted most attention. His languid elegance has been compared to Zinedine Zidane and the local press were outraged when Real Madrid's interest had the Spanish media referring to him as "the Brazilian Guti"; in Brazil he is rated far higher.

But would he really be ready for a World Cup?

Certainly it is hard to see the Sao Paulo state championship as a reliable measure. With Corinthians and Sao Paulo FC concentrating on the Libertadores Cup, and Palmeiras mired in crisis, there was not a lot to beat.

Moreover, Ganso has not found it easy to step up a level. His first-team debut came in February 2008 and it took him a while to find his feet.

Then there is the story of the Under-20 World Cup, held in Egypt last year. In the press conference after naming his squad for South Africa, Dunga commented that Ganso had only been a reserve during that under-20 tournament.

"He doesn't know too much about it," the player fired back. "I was first choice in all the games."

Ganso is correct, but his case is not a strong one. He scored one superb goal and supplied the occasional good pass, but he was substituted in nearly every game after being unable to impose himself consistently on the action. With the physical development of the game, that is not an easy task for an old-fashioned playmaker – which helps explain why players of this type have become so rare.

Barring a late injury to one of Dunga's 23, Ganso will not get the chance to show if he can tip the balance at the highest level, but before his career is over this hugely promising player will have plenty of opportunities to prove such promise is justified.

Tim Vickery

FACT FILE

Club Santos
Country Brazil
Born October 12, 1989, in Ananindeua
Honours 2010 Sao Paulo state championship

GERMANY

Marco REUS

Gladbach flier waiting in the wings

THE WORLD CUP dream of Borussia Monchengladbach's dribbling machine was only deferred when Germany coach Joachim Low decided not to include the 21-year-old in his squad for South Africa, concluding that a youngster just one season into his Bundesliga career was not quite ready for the big step-up.

But the prodigiously talented wide man will not remain a raw rookie forever and, when he does mature further, a glittering future should be his for the taking.

As a reward for a sensational season for Gladbach, he was selected for a Germany representative XI to play an end-of-season benefit game against Malta in Aachen, but had to pull out because of a thigh injury.

Dubbed "Rolls Reus", he joined Gladbach 12 months ago from second division Ahlen, in a £900,000 deal, to fill the boots of Werder Bremen-bound Germany international Marko Marin. The pair have a lot in common – the blinding acceleration, quick feet, great balance, impish persona and spiky hair – but Reus is more unselfish and does not flinch at the thought of tracking back.

German FA director of sport Matthias Sammer is not normally one to dole out high praise, yet even he makes an exception in the case of Reus, saying: "I saw him playing for Gladbach against Bayern and I have to say he impressed me a lot. Besides his terrific skill on the ball, I was particularly impressed by his attitude and work rate. He never shirked his defensive and tactical duties and was always on the move."

Reus' willingness to scrap and fight against the odds can be traced back to 2006 when, as a 17-year-old, he was let go by home-town club Borussia Dortmund, the pretext being that he was too frail.

For some the rejection would have marked the end, but he is made of sterner stuff.

"I didn't react emotionally when Dortmund released me," he recalls. "I just set about trying to make it somewhere else. I knew I had the ability."

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

Club Borussia Monchengladbach
Country Germany
Born May 31, 1989, in Dortmund
Previous club Ahlen

Stephane RUFFIER

Monaco's top stopper recalls days of Barthez

IT SHOULD come as a surprise to no one that Monaco's young goalkeeper is a big fan of the former France No1 Fabien Barthez.

With the same shaven head, shirt number (16), agility and explosive athleticism, it is only in temperament that they go their separate ways: Barthez, the ever-eccentric showman, Ruffier the strong, silent type bordering on the introverted.

To coin an overused phrase, Ruffier lets his ability "do the talking" – and how loud it has been shouting, with *France Football* magazine rating him the second-best keeper in Ligue 1, behind Lyon and France first-choice Hugo Lloris.

Consistent, spectacular and always alert, the 23-year-old displayed his full worth to Monaco in the 1-0 win at Paris Saint-Germain in January.

Bombarded by an unusually rampant PSG from the start, he countered with the game of his career, catching every cross, diving every which way and pulling off at least a dozen top-drawer reflex stops.

"In the two years he's been in the Monaco side he hasn't stopped making progress," says Montpellier coach Rene Girard, who incorporated him into his France Under-21 side in the autumn of 2007.

"From day one, I was astounded by his reflexes on his line, his anticipation and his acrobatic qualities. At that time, he still needed to work on his handling and kicking, but you have to give him his due. He's worked like crazy to improve and now is among the best in the country.

"His desire and ambition was palpable. When I first brought him into the Under-21 squad he was back-up at Monaco to Flavio Roma, who had been an automatic choice for a long time and had also played for Italy.

"Stephane did not say as much, but I could see how much he wanted to displace Roma and within a few months he managed it."

Reus' father was a pelota champion and his elder sister a national-level ice dancer, so with such a healthy sporting background it's not surprising that Girard says "the kid has an aura about him".

Nick Bidwell

FRANCE

FACT FILE

Club Monaco
Country France
Born September 27,1986, in Bayonne

MEXICO

Javier HERNANDEZ

Starlet heading for Old Trafford

MEXICO FANS have waited a long time for a young striker to rival the great Hugo Sanchez, but they may finally have a worthy successor in Javier Hernandez.

Since the retirement of Sanchez, the country has produced a fine crop of forwards but none looked to be the true heir to the Real Madrid great. Yet suddenly, almost without notice, Hernandez has appeared to occupy that space in the minds and hearts of supporters.

It was always known that the Guadalajara youngster had talent and the son and grandson of former Mexico internationals scored on his first-division debut aged 18.

At the Under-20 World Cup in Canada in 2007 he was an understudy for Giovani Dos Santos and Carlos Vela, scoring one goal in three games. He seemed to be a player with potential, but nothing more.

Suddenly, though, he has burst upon the scene. After spending three years on the bench with Guadalajara, he finally got his opportunity at the end of the 2009 clausura tournament and has not looked back. He scored 23 goals in 35 games and his status went from possible promise to national idol – the great white hope for the senior team in South Africa 2010.

His first performances in Javier Aguirre's national team could not have been more encouraging and his name began to be mentioned as a target for the likes of PSV and Wolfsburg.

Then, in April, a real heavyweight stepped in and he was signed by Manchester United for £5million. And it's not difficult to see why Alex Ferguson was so impressed.

Chicharito ("little pea") is the complete striker, with no apparent weaknesses. He's extremely fast and a great finisher. He's good in the air despite his slight 5ft 7½in frame and has a terrific shot. Comparisons with Michael Owen are inevitable, especially as they share a strong physical resemblance.

The only doubts concern his lack of experience in dealing with top-level opposition. Scoring goals in bunches in the Mexican league is not the same as doing it against the best defenders in the world. The difficult group that Mexico will face in South Africa 2010 will be his first real test, and then it will be up to Manchester United to adapt his qualities to the demanding style of England's Premier League.

Martin Del Palacio Langer

FACT FILE

Club Guadalajara
Country Mexico
Born June 1, 1988
International debut September 2009 v Colombia
International caps 12 (7 goals)
Honours 2009 Mexican apertura, 2007 Under-20 World Cup, 2009 Mexican InterLiga

FIVE TO FOLLOW

Nick Bidwell profiles the leading players from the Toulon Under-21 tournament

Club/Country Nordsjaelland/Denmark
Born July 11, 1988
Position Defender

Andreas BJELLAND

A TOWER of strength at centre-back, the Denmark captain not only performed his defensive duties with icy efficiency, but he also proved to be an instinctive team leader, organising and cajoling his colleagues to the Final.

Combative yet assured on the ball, in Denmark he is thought of as a very useful utility player, capable of lining up anywhere at the back or in midfield. Has represented his country at every level from under-16 to under-21.

Club/Country Zenit/Russia
Born February 18, 1989
Position Midfielder

Alexsei IONOV

BRIGHT and breezy starlet whose drive on the left flank was one of the few bright spots for an underachieving Russia coached by former national team striker Igor Kolyvanov.

Despite his team's many collective and individual failings, he did not look to abdicate responsibility and was always endeavouring to make things happen.

After coming through the youth ranks at Zenit, he broke into the first team last year and is clearly one for the future.

Club/Country Nimes (Fra)/Ivory Coast
Born January 13, 1988
Position Forward

Yannick BOLI

THE nephew of ex-Marseille and France centre-back Basile Boli and former Lens and Auxerre striker Roger Boli, this Paris-born front runner did his family name no harm with his irrepressible work for the victorious Ivorians.

He has two good feet, can play through the middle or out wide and is very hard to knock off the ball. He was a star of the Paris Saint-Germain youth team but, unable to hold down a first-team spot, he moved on to Nimes early this year.

Club/Country Rennes/France
Born February 8, 1990
Position Midfielder

Yacine BRAHIMI

THE little attacking midfielder's red card for dissent in the third/fourth-place play-off should not detract from an outstanding tournament.

Yet another graduate of the French national academy at Clairefontaine, his vision, technique and dribbling ability were there for all to see – showing just why clubs such as Real Madrid and Arsenal are tracking him closely.

Of Algerian descent, he is under contract to Rennes but spent the season just gone on loan to second division Clermont.

Club/Country Audax Italiano/Chile
Born June 30, 1989
Position Midfielder

Marco MEDEL

FOR the second successive year the left-footed Chile playmaker turned on the style at Toulon, this time scoring twice and making four others.

Blessed with great ball control and balance, he never seems to be rushed, his range of pass is impressive and he takes a marvellous free-kick too. Elegant and functional, he was voted the revelation of the 2009 Chilean league season.

Curse of the World Cup captains

Out of Africa...Ballack

Ballack, Essien and Ferdinand out... Drogba also a doubt

SOME big names were preparing to watch the World Cup from the treatment table after a series of injuries in the build-up to South Africa 2010.

Germany captain Michael Ballack injured an ankle playing for Chelsea in the FA Cup Final. He was joined by Ghana skipper Michael Essien and England captain Rio Ferdinand, both with knee injuries.

Ivory Coast were sweating on the fitness of their captain, Didier Drogba, who broke an elbow in a warm-up game against Japan. Others ruled out included Nigeria's John Obi Mikel, Nani (Portugal), Mourad Meghni (Algeria) and Lassana Diarra (France).

ALGERIA

● Injury has ruled out key midfieder Mourad Meghni.
● A search for new talent born in France produced a number of late call-ups.

Rais M'BOHLI (G)
25.04.1986
Slavia Sofia (Bul)
1 cap (0 goals)
Born in France to a Congolese father and an Algerian mother. Played for France Under-17s.

Habib BELLAID (D)
28.03.86
Boulogne (Fra)
1 cap (0 goals)
Played for France youth teams before making his Algerian debut in May.

Carl MEDJANI (D)
15.05.85
Ajaccio (Fra)
0 caps
Captained France Under-21s before switching nationality. Spent three years at Liverpool.

Ryad BOUDEBOUZ (M)
19.02.90
Sochaux (Fra)
1 cap (0 goals)
Former France Under-19 who made the final World Cup squad following Meghni's injury.

Adlene GUEDIOURA (M)
12.11.85
Wolverhampton W (Eng)
1 cap (0 goals)
Joined Wolves from Belgian side Charleroi. Son of Algeria international Nasser Guedioura.

Foued KADIR (M)
05.12.83
Valenciennes (Fra)
1 cap (0 goals)
Born in France and capped by Algeria at junior level but largely ignored since.

Mehdi LACEN (M)
05.02.84
Racing Santander (Spa)
2 caps (0 goals)
Born in Paris to an Algerian father and an Italian mother. Made his debut in March.

ARGENTINA

● Esteban Cambiasso and Javer Zanetti of Inter left out despite Champions League success.
● Strikers Diego Milito and Martin Palermo in; Ezequiel Lavezzi out.

Ariel GARCE (D)
14.07.79
Colon
4 caps (0 goals)
Versatile defender (right-back or centre) who has spent nearly all his club career in Argentina.

Martin PALERMO (F)
07.11.73
Boca Juniors
14 caps (8 goals)
Veteran who spent a decade out of favour after missing three penalties in one match.

AUSTRALIA

● Scott McDonald left out; third-choice keeper Brad Jones left squad to be with sick son.
● Rhys Williams injured, with the coach, Verbeek, blaming Middlesbrough for exacerbating his injury.

Michael BEAUCHAMP (D)
08.03.81
Al Jazira (UAE)
21 caps (1 goal)
Part of the 2006 World Cup squad, will join Melbourne Heart after the World Cup.

Richard GARCIA (M)
04.09.81
Hull City (Eng)
7 caps (0 goals)
Attacking midfielder whose career has been injury-plagued. Former West Ham junior.

Carl VALERI (M)
14.08.84
Sassuolo (Ita)
22 caps (0 goals)
Defensive midfielder who may take over from Vince Grella in the anchoring role.

BRAZIL

● Adriano left out by coach Dunga, who instead opted for an extra midfielder in 2002 World Cup winner Kleberson, who once played for Manchester United.

KLEBERSON (M)
19.06.79
Flamengo
31 caps (2 goals)
Versatile, two-footed midfielder who has re-emerged from the international wilderness.

CAMEROON

● Paul Le Guen called up a number of home-based players into his provisional 30, but only Aboubakar made the final 23.
● In a surprise move, veteran Rigobert Song made the cut.

Gaetan BONG (D)
25.04.88
Valenciennes (Fra)
1 cap (0 goals)
Former France junior who made the squad after FIFA approval to change his national allegiance.

Rigobert SONG (D)
01.07.76
Trabzonspor (Turkey)
136 caps (4 goals)
Left out of January's African Nations Cup squad but will compete in a fourth World Cup.

Joel MATIP (M)
08.08.91
Schalke (Ger)
4 caps (0 goals)
Missed African Nations Cup due to exams. Eder brother is former Germany Under-21 captain.

Landry NGUEMO (M)
28.11.85
Celtic (Sco)
20 caps (2 goals)
Midfield cover. Made his debut in 2006 and was in the 2010 African Nations Cup squad.

Vincent ABOUBAKAR (F)
22.01.92
Coton Sport
1 cap (0 goals)
Only locally-based player in the squad. Set to join Valenciennes in Ligue 1 after the World Cup.

Eric CHOUPO-MOTING (F)
23.03.89
Nurnberg (Ger)
1 cap (0 goals)
Former Germany youth international. Won his first cap against Portugal in June.

CHILE

• Midfielder Claudio Maldonado was left out after failing to recover from a knee injury.

Luis MARIN (G)
18.05.83
Union Espanola
3 caps (0 goals)
Won the vote for third keepers' spot over Christopher Toselli of Universidad Catolica.

Ismael FUENTES (D)
04.08.81
Universidad Catolica
29 caps (1 goal)
A regular under previous coach Nelson Acosta, he played only intermittently in the qualifiers.

Rodrigo TELLO (M)
14.10.79
Besiktas (Tur)
34 caps (3 goals)
A veteran of the 2002 and 2006 qualifiers who only played once in the 2010 campaign.

Gonzalo FIERRO (M)
21.03.83
Flamengo (Bra)
18 caps (1 goal)
Right-sided winger who made his debut in 2006. Known as "the young gunslinger".

DENMARK

● Simon Busk Poulsen and Patrick Mtiliga are the surprise choices at left-back.
● Soren Larsen chosen ahead of Rajko Lekic.

Jesper CHRISTIANSEN (G)
24.04.78
Copenhagen
11 caps (0 goals)
Played as a striker in his youth and then turned to goalkeeping for fun at the age of 17.

Simon Busk POULSEN (D)
07.04.84
AZ Alkmaar (Hol)
5 caps (0 goals)
Versatile player who doubles as a winger and a full-back. Recalled to the team in May.

Patrick MTILIGA (D)
28.01.81
Malaga (Spa)
4 caps (0 goals)
Left-back with a Danish mother and Tanzanian father. Has played in Holland as well as Spain.

Mikkel BECKMANN (M)
24.10.83
Randers
5 caps (0 goals)
Surprise choice after impressing for Randers towards end of the Danish Superliga season.

Thomas ENEVOLDSEN (M)
27.07.87
Groningen (Hol)
6 caps (1 goal)
Scored his first international goal against Senegal in the World Cup warm-ups.

Jakob POULSEN (M)
07.07.83
AGF Aarhus
13 caps (1 goal)
Hard-running wing-back who has struggled with an ankle injury this season.

Soren LARSEN (F)
06.09.81
Duisburg (Ger)
19 caps (11 goals)
Tall and rangy striker who has played for Schalke, Toulouse and now Duisburg.

ENGLAND

● Surprise omission of Theo Walcott, with Shaun Wright-Phillips chosen instead.
● Michael Dawson a late replacement for the injured Rio Ferdinand.

Stephen WARNOCK (D)
12.12.81
Aston Villa
1 cap (0 goals)
Left-back cover for Ashley Cole, with Capello having reservations over Leighton Baines.

Michael DAWSON (D)
11.11.83
Tottenham Hotspur
0 caps
Fearless, never-say-die centre-back. Called up following an injury to Rio Ferdinand.

Jamie CARRAGHER (D)
28.01.78
Liverpool
36 caps (0 goals)
Versatile defender who quit the national team in 2007 but persuaded to return by Capello.

Shaun WRIGHT-PHILLIPS (M)
25.10.81
Manchester City
31 caps (6 goals)
Right-winger who provides pace on the flank. Adopted son of ex-England striker Ian Wright.

FRANCE

● Karim Benzema is the surprise omission, along with Samir Nasri.
● Lassana Diarra ruled out with a late injury.

Anthony REVEILLERE (D)
10.11.79
Lyon
6 caps (0 goals)
Right-back who was recalled in May after a five-year absence blighted by injury.

Marc PLANUS (D)
07.03.82
Bordeaux
1 cap (0 goals)
Central defender who has earned a belated international call-up at the age of 28.

Abou DIABY (M)
11.05.86
Arsenal (Eng)
5 caps (0 goals)
Missed the 2006 Champions League Final v Barcelona with a broken and dislocated ankle.

Djibril CISSE (F)
12.08.81
Panathinaikos (Gre)
39 caps (9 goals)
A proven international who made the cut after winning the Greek title this season.

Mathieu VALBUENA (M)
28.09.84
Marseille
1 cap (1 goal)
Late-developing attacking midfielder who scored on his international debut in May.

GERMANY

● Hit by injuries to No1 keeper Rene Adler, captain Michael Ballack, midfielder Christian Trasch and defender Heiko Westermann.
● Striker Kevin Kuranyi ignored by coach Low.

Sami KHEDIRA (M)
04.04.87
Stuttgart
5 caps (0 goals)
Dynamic and industrious central midfielder. The son of a Tunisian father and German mother.

Hans-Jorg BUTT (G)
28.04.74
Bayern Munich
3 caps (0 goals)
Penalty-taking veteran who had not featured in the Germany side for seven years before spring.

Marko MARIN (M)
13.03.89
Werder Bremen
9 caps (1 goal)
Irrepressible little playmaker or left-winger blessed with second helpings of dribbling brilliance.

Dennis AOGO (D)
14.01.87
Hamburg
2 caps (0 goals)
Left-back or defensive midfielder. Son of a German mother and Nigerian father.

Holger BADSTUBER (D)
13.03.89
Bayern Munich
2 caps (0 goals)
Left-back or central defender who has forced his way into the Bayern first team this season.

Marcell JANSEN (D)
04.11.85
Hamburg
31 caps (2 goals)
Pacy and creative left-sided player who has only just returned after injuring his ankle.

GHANA

● Injury to Michael Essien a major blow.
● Surprise call-ups for Kevin-Prince Boateng and Quincy Owusu-Abeyie.

Stephen AHORLU (G)
05.09.88
Hearts of Lions
0 caps
Forced his way into contention after strong performance in the local Premier League.

Jonathan MENSAH (D)
13.07.90
Udinese (Ita)
5 caps (0 goals)
Winner of the Under-20 world title in Egypt last year. Yet to make his Serie A debut.

Quincy OWUSU-ABEYIE (M)
15.04.86
Al Sadd (Sau)
13 caps (1 goal)
Born in Holland to Ghanaian parents. Had a chequered career since leaving Arsenal in 2006.

Kevin-Prince BOATENG (M)
06.03.87
Portsmouth (Eng)
0 caps
German mother and Ghanaian father. Brother of Germany defender Jerome Boateng.

Dominic ADIYIAH (F)
29.11.89
Milan (Ita)
6 caps (0 goals)
Top scorer and the best player at last year's World Youth Championships in Egypt.

GREECE

● A recall for veteran midfielder Christos Patsatzoglou.
● First selection for experienced Aris midfielder Sakis Prittas.

Giorgos SEITARIDIS (D)
04.06.81
Panathinaikos
69 caps (1 goal)
Veteran right-back who was a mainstay of the Euro 2004-winning side.

Stelios MALEZAS (D)
11.03.85
PAOK
0 caps
Former midfielder, now a centre-back, who was called up for the first time in February.

Christos PATSATZOGLOU (M)
19.03.79
Omonia (Cyp)
42 caps (1 goal)
Veteran who was a member of the squad at Euro 2008 who can also play in defence.

Sakis PRITTAS (M)
09.01.79
Aris Salonika
0 caps
Central midfielder who received a surprise first international call-up at the age of 31.

HOLLAND

● No place for Ruud Van Nistelrooy.
● Stijn Schaars chosen ahead of Orlando Engelaar in midfield.

Sander BOSCHKER (G)
20.10.70
Twente
1 cap (0 goals)
Uncapped veteran who was called up after a title-winning season with Twente.

Andre OOLJER (D)
11.07.74
PSV
54 caps (3 goals)
Experienced centre-back who made the squad despite a season troubled by injuries.

Stijn SCHAARS (M)
11.01.84
AZ
12 caps (0 goals)
Left-footed defensive midfielder who made the World Cup squad despite his club's poor season.

Ryan BABEL
19.12.86
Liverpool (Eng)
39 caps (5 goals)
Winger who was included despite patchy domestic form at Liverpool.

HONDURAS

● Striker Carlo Costly was ruled out with an ankle injury.
● US-based striker Roger Espinoza made the cut.

Victor BERNARDEZ (D)
24.05.82
Anderlecht (Blg)
41 caps (1 goal)
Centre-back who was a regular in qualifying but has had a lack of playing time in Belgium.

Edgar ALVAREZ (M)
09.01.80
Bari (Ita)
46 caps (3 goals)
Athletic, fast wing-back or right-sided midfielder who has played in Italy since 2004.

Roger ESPINOZA (M)
25.10.86
Kansas City Wizards (USA)
12 caps (3 goals)
Has lived in the US since he was 12 and never played club football in Honduras.

ITALY

● Francesco Totti ignored by Marcello Lippi.
● Fabio Grosso, penalty hero in 2006, dropped from final 23, along with Juventus team-mate Antonio Candreva.

Fabio QUAGLIARELLA (F)
31.10.83
Napoli
20 caps (4 goals)
A key figure in Euro 2008, he is a relative surprise call-up at the expense of Giovanni Rossi.

Seydou DOUMBIA (F)
31.12.87
Young Boys (Swi)
7 caps (1 goal)
The star of the just-completed Swiss season, who has replaced Bakary Kone in the squad.

MEXICO

● Jonathan Dos Santos dropped from final 23.
● Striker Albert Medina chosen ahead of Nery Castillo.

NEW ZEALAND

● Surprise selection of uncapped Aaron Clapham.

NIGERIA

● John Obi Mikel ruled out through injury.
● Strikers Ike Uche and Victor Anichebe left out of final 23.

Leonardo BONUCCI (D)
01.05.87
Bari
2 caps (1 goal)
Centre-back who was included in the squad after an impressive debut in March v Cameroon.

IVORY COAST

● Striker Seydou Doumbia chosen ahead of Bakary Kone.
● Midfielder Emmanuel Kone chosen ahead of Emerse Fae.

JAPAN

● Striker Kisho Yano chosen ahead of Sota Hirayama.
● Veteran Kawaguchi grabs third keeper spot.

Paul AGUILAR (D)
06.03.86
Pachuca
10 caps (2 goals)
Strong attacking right-back who likes to get forward and shoot from distance.

David MULLIGAN (D)
24.03.82
Unattached
25 caps (3 goals)
Right-back recently released by Wellington Phoenix. Previously with Port Vale in England.

Rabiu AFOLABI (D)
18.04.80
Salzburg (Aut)
16 caps (0 goals)
Central defender who is back in contention after winning the Austrian league.

Christian MAGGIO (M)
11.02.82
Napoli
5 caps (0 goals)
Versatile late developer who is in excellent form for Napoli on the right side of midfield.

Daniel YEBOAH (G)
13.11.84
ASEC Abidjan
4 caps (0 goals)
Recalled after a five-year gap. Had been playing in the lower leagues in France.

Yoshikatsu KAWAGUCHI (G)
15.08.75
Jubilo Iwata
117 caps (0 goals)
Hugely experienced keeper who has recovered more quickly than expected from a broken leg.

Jorge TORRES (D)
16.01.88
Atlas
8 caps (0 goals)
Dynamic left-back who rose into prominence recently and edged Adrian Aldrete from the squad.

Jeremy BROCKIE (M)
07.10.87
Newcastle Jets (Aus)
17 caps (0 goals)
Wide man who has recovered from a broken leg. Scored at the 2008 Olympics.

Sani KAITA (M)
02.05.86
Alania Vladikavkaz (Rus)
22 caps (0 goals)
Captain of the impressive Nigeria Under-20 side of 2005. On loan in Russia from Monaco.

Riccardo MONTOLIVO (M)
18.01.85
Fiorentina
13 caps (0 goals)
Playmaker who has rarely reproduced his club form on the international scene.

Steve GOHOURI (D)
08.02.81
Wigan Athletic (Eng)
8 caps (3 goals)
Had disciplinary problems in Germany before a move to Wigan revived his career.

Kisho YANO (F)
05.04.84
Albirex Niigata
18 caps (2 goals)
Striker who began his career as a full-back. Made his international debut against Peru in 2007.

Alberto MEDINA (F)
29.05.83
Guadalajara
56 caps (6 goals)
Once the "great Mexican hope", he has failed to fulfil his potential but remains a decent winger.

Jeremy CHRISTIE (M)
22.05.83
Tampa Bay Rowdies (USA)
21 caps (1 goal)
Utility player who features in midfield or at right-back. Started at Barnsley.

Haruna LUKMAN (M)
12.04.90
Monaco (Fra)
5 caps (1 goal)
Could replace the injured John Obi Mikel, though he is a much more attacking option.

Simone PEPE (M)
30.08.83
Udinese
15 caps (0 goals)
Right-winger who will join Juventus after the World Cup on a season-long loan.

Emmanuel KONE (M)
31.12.86
International (Rom)
12 caps (0 goals)
A back-up since the start of the qualifiers. Has had problems at club level in Romania.

Aaron CLAPHAM (M)
15.01.87
Canterbury United
0 caps
Surprise selection after impressing at a training camp for domestic-based players in April.

Brown IDEYE (F)
10.10.88
Sochaux (Fra)
0 caps
Late replacement for the injured John Obi Mikel. Joined Sochaux from Swiss side Neuchatel.

John UTAKA (F)
08.01.82
Portsmouth (Eng)
44 caps (5 goals)
FA Cup winner in May, his younger brother Peter was also part of the preliminary squad.

NORTH KOREA

● Striker Kim Myong-won named as third keeper.

KIM Myong-won (G)
15.07.83
Amrokgang
3 games in qualifying (0 goals)
Named as a goalkeeper but made three sub appearances as an outfield player in qualifiers.

RI Chol-myong (M)
18.02.88
Pyongyang City
1 game in qualifying (0 goals)
Playmaker who impressed when North Korea won the AFC Challenge Cup in February.

PAK Sung-hyok (M)
30.05.90
Sobaeksu
0 games in qualifying
Defensive midfielder who did not feature in qualifying and was a surprise selection.

PARAGUAY

● Midfielder Rodrigo Rojas left out.
● Lucas Barrios included following a switch of nationality.

Lucas BARRIOS (F)
13.11.84
Borussia Dortmund (Ger)
3 caps (3 goals)
Born in Argentina with a Paraguayan mother, he was granted citizenship in April.

DANIEL FERNANDES (G)
25.08.83
Iraklis (Gre)
2 caps (0 goals)
Canada-born, he has played in Spain, Greece and Germany but never Portugal's top flight.

BETO (G)
01.05.82
Porto
1 cap (0 goals)
Selected as reserve keeper after impressing in place of the injured Helton at Porto.

RICARDO COSTA (D)
16.05.81
Wolfsburg (Ger)
8 caps (0 goals)
Versatile defender who impressed during the season while on loan at Lille in France.

DANNY (F)
07.08.83
Zenit St Petersburg (Rus)
11 caps (2 goals)
Skilful winger, back after injury, signed by Zenit for £25million to replace Andrei Arshavin.

RUBEN AMORIM (M)
27.01.85
Benfica
0 caps
Former Under-21 called into squad after late injury to Nani. Started career at Belenenses.

Andjelko DJURICIC (G)
21.11.80
Uniao Leiria (Por)
3 caps (0 goals)
Surprise selection as third-choice keeper after impressing in friendly against New Zealand.

Ivan OBRADOVIC (D)
25.07.88
Real Zaragoza (Spa)
12 caps (1 goal)
Left-back who missed most of the season due to a knee injury but who will cover for Kolarov.

Dragan MRDJA (F)
23.01.84
Vojvodina
6 caps (2 goals)
Penalty-box predator who finished the season as the Serbian league's top scorer.

Martin JAKUBKO (F)
26.02.80
Saturn Moscow (Rus)
24 caps (4 goals)
At 6ft 4½in, his physical presence makes him a threat from the bench.

Dusan PERNIS (G)
28.11.84
Dundee United (Sco)
3 caps (0 goals)
Surprise selection after ending the season with victory in the Scottish Cup Final.

Kamil KOPUNEK (M)
18.05.84
Spartak Trnava
7 caps (0 goals)
Club captain who has been with Spartak for all of his career. Ideal replacement for Karhan.

Juraj KUCKA (M)
26.02.87
Sparta Prague (CzR)
6 caps (0 goals)
Defensive midfielder who made his debut in 2008. A knee injury kept him out of the qualifiers.

Marek SAPARA (M)
31.07.82
Ankaragucu (Tur)
25 caps (2 goals)
Left winger who moved to Turkey after twice winning the Norwegian championship.

Martin JAKUBKO (F)
26.02.80
Saturn Moscow (Rus)
24 caps (4 goals)
At 6ft 4½in, his physical presence makes him a threat from the bench.

Suad FILEKOVIC (D)
16.09.78
Maribor
13 caps (0 goals)
Left-sided defender who will provide cover for the full-backs. Had a brief spell with Barnsley.

Elvedin DZINIC (D)
25.08.85
Maribor
1 cap (0 goals)
Spent all his career with one club. One of the few domestic-based players in the squad.

Tim MATAVZ (F)
13.01.89
Groningen (Hol)
0 caps
Promising young striker who was a surprise inclusion after his goals in the Eredivisie this term.

Anele NGCONGCA (D)
21.10.87
Genk (Blg)
5 caps (0 goals)
Right-back who moved to Belgium without ever playing in the South African league.

Bongani KHUMALO (D)
06.01.87
SuperSport United
14 caps (0 goals)
In March, he could not even make the squad, now first choice alongside captain Mokoena.

SOUTH AFRICA

● Striker Benni McCarthy was left out of final 23 amid concerns about his fitness.

SERBIA

● Defender Ivica Dragutinovic ruled out through injury.
● Forwards Dejan Lekic and Miralem Sulejmani ignored in favour of in-form Dragan Mrdja.

SLOVENIA

● Winger Mirnes Sisic and veteran Anton Zlogar failed to make the 23.

SLOVAKIA

● Veteran midfielder Miroslav Karhan ruled out of tournament with Achilles injury.

Thanduyise KHUBONI (M)
23.05.86
Golden Arrows
9 caps (0 goals)
Emerged from virtual obscurity at the start of the season and could now play a prominent role.

Siyabonga NOMVETHE (F)
02.12.77
Moroka Swallows
76 caps (16 goals)
Scored when South Africa won its only World Cup finals match, against Slovenia, in 2002.

KIM Jae-sung (M)
03.10.83
Pohang Steelers
8 caps (2 goals)
Hard-running, right-sided midfielder who played youth football with Park Ji-sung.

AHN Jung-hwan (F)
27.01.76
Dalian Shide (Chn)
71 caps (17 goals)
Veteran striker who scored the goal that beat Italy in the 2002 World Cup.

Javi MARTINEZ (M)
02.08.88
Athletic Bilbao
2 caps (0 goals)
Driving central midfielder who has become a crucial figure at Bilbao this season.

Fernando LLORENTE (F)
26.02.85
Athletic Bilbao
7 caps (3 goals)
Target man who is enjoying his best-ever season. Gives Spain a different option up front.

Reto ZIEGLER (D)
16.01.86
Sampdoria (Ita)
12 caps (1 goal)
Left-sided defender or midfielder who is likely to be cover at full-back.

Pirmin SCHWEGLER (M)
09.03.87
Eintracht Frankfurt (Ger)
4 caps (0 goals)
Midfielder who began his career at Lucerne. His brother, Christian, plays for Strasbourg.

Egidio AREVALO (M)
01.01.82
Penarol
6 caps (0 goals)
Back in the squad after helping Penarol win the clausura and overall Uruguayan title.

Ignacio GONZALEZ (M)
14.05.82
Valencia (Spa)
17 caps (1 goal)
Was on loan at Levadiakos in Greece this season to ensure he got a regular game.

Herculez GOMEZ (F)
06.04.82
Pachuca (Mexico)
4 caps (2 goals)
Top scorer in Mexico last term with 10 goals for Puebla. Since transferred to Pachuca.

Edson BUDDLE (F)
21.05.81
Los Angeles Galaxy
3 caps (2 goals)
Named Edson after Pele. Scored all nine of Galaxy's opening MSL goals this season.

SOUTH KOREA

● Veteran forward Ahn Jung-hwan chosen but fellow hero from 2002, Seol Ki-hyeon ignored.

YEOM Ki-hun (F)
30.03.83
Ulsan Hyundai
35 caps (3 goals)
Winger in Jeonbuk Motor's 2006 Asian Champions League win. Had a trial with WBA.

PEDRO (F)
28.07.87
Barcelona
3 caps (1 goal)
The only player to have scored in all six major club competitions in one season.

URUGUAY

● Striker Jorge Martinez, plus midfielders Jorge Rodriguez and Alvaro Gonzalez left out of the final 23.

Alvaro FERNANDEZ (M)
11.10.85
Universidad de Chile (Chl)
7 caps (0 goals)
Tall, quick attacking midfielder nicknamed "Pajaro" (bird) who is in Chile on loan from Nacional.

KIM Hyung-il (D)
27.04.84
Pohang Steelers
2 caps (0 goals)
Tall centre-back whose form last season for Asian champions Pohang earned him a call-up.

KIM Bo-kyung (M)
06.10.89
Oita Trinita (Jap)
6 caps (0 goals)
Versatile midfielder who can play on the left or in the centre. On loan from Cerezo Osaka.

SPAIN

● Marcos Senna ignored, along with strikers Dani Guiza and Alvaro Negredo.
● In-form Fernando Llorente and Pedro included, but no room for Santi Cazorla.

Victor VALDES (G)
14.01.82
Barcelona
1 cap (0 goals)
Finally received international recognition after exceptional performances this season.

SWITZERLAND

● Full-back Philipp Degen left out, along with midfielder Johan Vonlanthen.
● Left-back Christoph Spycher out through injury.

Marlo EGGIMANN (D)
24.01.81
Hannover (Ger)
8 caps (0 goals)
Defender who has played his club football in Germany since 2002. Former Under-21 captain.

Martin SILVA (G)
25.03.83
Defensor Sporting
1 cap (0 goals)
Won his solitary international cap in a friendly against Algeria in August 2009.

Mauricio VICTORINO (D)
11.10.82
Universidad de Chile (Chl)
4 caps (0 goals)
Strong, mobile marker who returned to the set-up for the play-offs against Costa Rica.

USA

● Strikers Charlie Davies and Brian Ching ignored in favour of in-form striker Edson Buddle and Herculez Gomez.

Jose TORRES (M)
29.10.87
Pachuca (Mex)
10 caps (0 goals)
Born in Texas to American and Mexican parentage. Offers good ball retention in midfield.

● *International caps and goals correct up to and including June 7, 2010*

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Warm up-clash

South Korea's Kim Dong-jin (centre) and Lee Jung-soo go up against Sergei Kornilenko of Belarus – in a friendly in Kufstein, Austria – in preparation for their upcoming World Cup campaign in South Africa. More information, page 87

Bahrain boss...Hickersberger

BAHRAIN

Austrian boss

Austria's Josef Hickersberger has taken charge of Bahrain's national side. He replaces Milan Macala, who has joined AFC Cup quarter-finalists Kazma of Kuwait.

BRAZIL

Friendly in the US

The *Selecao* will play a friendly against USA at the Meadowlands stadium in New Jersey, close to New York City, on August 10.

BULGARIA

Berbatov retires

Dimitar Berbatov, team captain and all-time leading international scorer, has quit the national team.

The 29-year-old Manchester United striker, who scored 49 goals in 74 caps for his country, said: "It was a difficult decision but sometimes we have to take difficult decisions."

Quitting...Berbatov

CHILE

T&T game hit by quake

A World Cup warm-up against Trinidad & Tobago in the northern city of Iquique was rocked by a 10-second earthquake during the first

RESULTS

FRIENDLIES

Saturday, March 6

Mar 6 - Puerto La Cruz
Venezuela 2 (Granados 7, Sanchez 89)
North Korea 1 (Mun In-guk 65)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Buitrago (Col)
Venezuela: Morales - Pernia, Perozo (Clavijo 63), Fuenmayor, Granados, F Flores, Di Giorgi, A Flores (Sanchez 79), Pena (Del Valle 72), Moreno (Garcia 82), Orozco (Farias 53).
North Korea: Ri Myong-guk - Cha Jong-hyok, Ri Jun-il, Pak Chol-jin, Ji Yun-nam, Ri Kwang-chon, Kim Yong-jun, Mun In-guk, Pak Nam-chol (Kim Kum-il 53), Choe Kum-chol, An Chol-hyok.

Wednesday, March 17

Mar 17 - Torreon
Mexico 2 (Blanco 51, Hernandez 68)
North Korea 1 (Choe Kum-chol 57)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Moreno (Pan)
Mexico: G Ochoa - Magallon, Valenzuela, Rojas (J A Castro 46), Torres, Araujo (Reyna 46), Luna, J Dos Santos (Noriega 71), Blanco (Sabah 54), A Medina (Arreola 83), Hernandez (Molina 83).
North Korea: Ri Myong-guk - Cha Jong-hyok (Nam Song-chol 61), Ri Jun-il, Pak Nam-chol (M) (Kim Kum-il 69), Ri Kwang-chon, Ji Yun-nam, Kim Yong-jun, Choe Kum-chol, Mun In-guk, An Chol-hyok, Pak Chol-jin (Pak Nam-chol (D) 81).

Sunday, March 21

Mar 21 - Kopavogur
Iceland 2 (Vilhjalmsson 10, Sigthorsson 37)
Faroe Islands 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Larsen (Den)
Iceland: Gunnleifsson (Thorgeirsson 46) - Adalsteinsson, Fridgeirsson (G R Gunnarsson 89), B E Gudjonsson, Fjoluson, V F Gislason, Johann Berg Gudmundsson (O O Hauksson 65), Kristjansson, Sigthorsson (Finnbogason 84), Vilhjalmsson (B Sigurdsson 49), Thorsteinsson (Gudnason 77).
Faroe Islands: Gunnar Nielsen - a Bo (Gregersen 65), Atli Danielsen (S Olsen 46), Lokin (av Flotum 72), Poulsen, Benjaminsen, S Samuelsen (Mouritsen 79), Zachariasen (Einar Hansen 72), Mortensen, Naes, Edmundsson (B Olsen 79).

Mar 21 - Windhoek
Namibia 0
Botswana 0

Wednesday, March 24

Mar 24 - Fort-de-France
Martinique 0
Haiti 0
Ref: Borius (Mar)
Martinique: Heurlie - Zaire (Alcindor 84), Suedile, Deluge, Clement, Ravi (Herelle 74), Gustan, Audel, Percin (Parsemain 46), Pancrate (Joseph-Louis 77), Chosrova (J Goron 59).
Haiti: Occenat (W Pierre-Louis 84) - Jerome (Sampeur 49), Bruny, Jean, Gilles, Fucien (Herold 51), Chery, Ednerson (Prophete 74), Jacob (Germain 57), Jean-Baptiste (Sirin 49), Cadet (Belfort Fils 61).

Mar 24 - Charlotte, USA
Mexico 0
Iceland 0
Att: 63,227. **Ref:** Geiger (USA)
Mexico: Michel - Aguilar, Magallon, Valenzuela, Torres (Sabah 46), Torrado, Juarez, Aldrete, Bautista, Barrera, Vuoso (Reyna 72).
Iceland: Gunnleifsson - Adalsteinsson, Fridgeirsson, B E Gudjonsson, Fjoluson, V F Gislason, Johann Berg Gudmundsson (Gudnason 84), Kristjansson, Sigthorsson, Vilhjalmsson, Thorsteinsson (G O Jonsson 87).

Wednesday, March 31

Mar 31 - Temuco
Chile 0
Venezuela 0
Att: 20,000. **Ref:** Silvera (Uru)
Chile: Marin - Fuenzalida (Abarca 78), Martinez, Medel, Aranguiz, Seymour, Millar, Paredes (R Gonzalez 32; Ross 78), Fierro, Hernandez, Vargas.
Venezuela: Morales - Romero, Bustamante, Pernia (Erazo 66), Granados, Di Giorgi, F Flores (Jimenez 53), A Flores, Chourio (Sanchez 85), Farias (Aristiguieta 82), Orozco (Blanco 61).

Mar 31 - Asuncion
Paraguay 1 (Estigarribia 37)
South Africa 1 (Tshabalala 71)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Fagundes (Bra)
Paraguay: Centurion - Bonet (C Benitez 55), P Benitez, Manzur, Torres, Rojas (Hobecker 63), Ortigoza (Riveros 55), Santana (Moreira 73), Gamarra, Ayala (Beltran 65), Estigarribia (Perez 66).
South Africa: Khune - Khumalo, Sangweni, Thwala (Mdledle 72), Gaxa (Nthethe 70), Davids (Letsholonyane 46), Khuboni, Modise, Moriri (Schalkwyk 46), Tshabalala (Cale 72), Mphela.

Saturday, April 3

Apr 3 - Basseterre
St Kitts & Nevis 3 (Harris 1, Lake 14, G Isaac 42)
Guadeloupe 0
HT: 3-0. **Ref:** Matthew (StK)
St Kitts & Nevis: Byron (Archibald 80) - Leader, K Mitchum, Williams, G Isaac, Lake (Hughes 63), Harris (Clarke 63), J Francis (Warner 71), A Saddler (Elliott 74), Richards, S Isaac.
Guadeloupe: Celigny - Lina, Gomez (Bartouche 73), Lafortune, Lambourde, Babel, Aubatin, Hannany, Jerome (Dan 61), Laurence, Arbau.

Wednesday, April 7

Apr 7 - Osaka
Japan 0
Serbia 3 (Mrdja 15, 22, Tomic 60)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 46,270. **Ref:** Choi (SKo)
Japan: Narazaki - Nakazawa, Kurihara (Ishikawa 46), Tokunaga, Nagatomo, S Nakamura (Yamase 70), Inamoto, Endo (Makino 82), Abe, Okazaki, Koroki (Tamada 46; Yano 82).
Serbia: Brkic (Jovanic 86) - Ninkov (Vulicevic 64), Milovic, Lomic, V Stankovic, Fejsa (Mitrovic 70), Petrovic, Tadic (Davidov 52), Tomic (Beljic 85), Mrdja, Lekic (Kaluderovic 78).

Wednesday, April 21

Apr 21 - San Pedro Sula
Honduras 0
Venezuela 1 (F Flores 51)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Moreno (Pan)
Honduras: N Valladares (Canales 46) - Mendoza, Norales (Johnny Palacios 46), O Chavez, Izaguirre, Guevara, R Nunez (Bengtson 46), Turcios, M Valladares (Acevedo 46), Pavon (Welcome 70), W Martinez (Leveron 60).
Venezuela: Morales - Granados, Pernia, Erazo, Machado (Perozo 68), Di Giorgi (Alvarez 90), F Flores, A Flores (Sanchez 80), Chourio (Fernandez 77), Farias (V Perez 72), Orozco (Vargas 60).

Thursday, April 22

Apr 22 - Wiesbaden, Germany
South Africa 0
North Korea 0
Att: 628
South Africa: Khune - Khumalo, Thwala (Mdledle 72), Sangweni, Tshabalala, Davids (Letsholonyane 54), Khuboni, Modise, Nthethe (Jali 59), Moriri (Nomvete 59), Mphela (Mashego 84).
North Korea: Ri Myong-guk - Cha Jong-hyok, Pak Nam-chol (M) (Kim Kum-il 83), Ri Kwang-chon, Ri Jun-il, Choe Kum-chol (An Chol-hyok 51), Ji Yun-nam, Kim Yong-jun (Ri Chol-myong 29), Mun In-guk (Pak Nam-chol (D) 46), Hong Yong-jo, Pak Chol-jin.

Wednesday, April 28

Apr 28 - Offenbach, Germany
South Africa 2 (Moriri 51, Nomvete 85)
Jamaica 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 562. **Ref:** Sippel (Ger)
South Africa: Khune - Gaxa (Nthethe 75), Khumalo, Sangweni, Thwala (Mdledle 46), Davids (Letsholonyane 46), Khuboni, Modise (Jali 74), Moriri (Nomvete 60), Mphela, Tshabalala.
Jamaica: Kerr - Breakenridge, Dicoy Williams (Campbell 70), J Taylor, Watson (Cousins 70), Virgo, Edwards (Walters 85), Boyd (Finlayson 78), Daley (Swaby 60), Johnson (Hodges 89), Bryan.

Wednesday, May 5

May 5 - Cutral-Co
Argentina 4 (Bertoglio 34, 56, Palermo 43, Blanco 56)
Haiti 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 16,500. **Ref:** Osses (Chl)
Argentina: Pozo (Gabbarini 46) - Garce, Goltz (Caruzzo 69), Insaurralde, Villagra, Toranzo, Mercier (Olmedo 62), Blanco, Bertoglio (Jara 70), Ortega (Fernandez 59), Palermo (Pereyra 65).
Haiti: Jean-Zephirin (Occenat 55) - Bruny, Jean, Sirin (Ednerson 60), Jerome, Alexandre (Germain 57), Marcelin (Guemsly 58), K Pierre-Louis (Herold 46), Gilles, Dieujuste (Belfort Fils 75), Jean-Baptiste.

May 5 - Iquique
Chile 2 (Morales 1, Toro 49)
Trinidad & Tobago 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Antequera (Bol)
Chile: Marin - Labrin (Hartbottle 46), Toro, Martinez, Medel, Cereceda, Fuenzalida (Espinoza 69), Morales (Caroca 82), Meneses, Gazale (Pizarro 76), Hernandez.
Trinidad & Tobago: J M Williams - A Edwards, K Williams, Cyrus, Leon, Cupid, Jorsling, Hector (Cummings 79), Carter (Bartholomew 55), Daniel, Theobald (Jamerson 55).

Friday, May 7

May 7 - East Rutherford, USA
Mexico 0
Ecuador 0
Ref: Depiero (Can)
Mexico: Michel - Aguilar, Valenzuela, Juarez, Magallon, Torres, Torrado, I Castro (Guardado 75), Hernandez, Blanco (Barrera 61), A Medina (Bautista 61).
Ecuador: Elizaga - Ibarra, Hurtado, De la Cruz, Fleitas, Nazareno, Minda, Arroyo (P Quinonez 90), Hidalgo, M Quinonez (Rojas 68), Kaviedes (Preciado 86).

Monday, May 10

May 10 - Chicago, USA
Mexico 1 (A Medina 59)
Senegal 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Salazar
Mexico: O Perez - Moreno, Aguilar, Valenzuela, Juarez, Aldrete, Torrado, I Castro (Guardado 46), Barrera (A Medina 56), Bautista (Blanco 56), Hernandez.
Senegal: K Ndiaye - Dieylani, A Ba, F Gomis, D A Mame (S Ndiaye 71), Ly (Alioune 71), Ndiour, Sidibe (S Cisse 77), Diallo (D Gomis 83), T S Mame (Gaye 60), Diedhiou (M Cisse 60).

Wednesday, May 12

May 12 - Sana'a
Yemen 1
Malawi 0
HT: 1-0

Thursday, May 13

May 13 - Aachen
Germany 3 (Cacau 16, 58, Scicluna og 61)
Malta 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 27,000. **Ref:** Hamer (Lux)
Germany: Neuer - Beck (Trasch 57), A Friedrich (Westermann 72), Tasci (Hummels 46), Aogo (Boateng 79), Khedira (Reinartz 72), Trochowski, Kroos (Grosskreutz 57), Cacau, Podolski, Kiessling.
Malta: Haber - A Muscat, A Agius, Scicluna, S Bajada, Pace (Cilia 9), Grima (Woods 75), Briffa, Fenech (Failla 67), Cohen, M Mifsud (Bogdanovic 83).

May 13 - Houston, USA
Mexico 1 (Guardado 52)
Angola 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 70,099. **Ref:** Toledo (USA)
Mexico: G Ochoa - Aguilar (Barrera 65), Magallon, Moreno, Torres (Aldrete 46), Torrado (Osorio 70), Juarez, A Medina, Guardado, Blanco, Bautista (Hernandez 75).
Angola: Lama - Xara, Kali, Kikas, Pataca (Gomito 62), Job, Minguito (Geraldo 54), Amaro, Santana (Rasca 54), Mabina (Joco 85), Avex (Miguel Quiame 62).

Saturday, May 15

May 15 - Nyon, Switzerland
Paraguay 1 (Santa Cruz pen 85)
North Korea 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Bertoli (Swi)
Paraguay: D Barreto - M Caceres (Caniza 71), J C Caceres (Morel 72), Da Silva, Bonet, Torres, Vera (Santana 61), Ledesma (Riveros 76), Estigarribia, Achucarro, Santa Cruz.
North Korea: Ri Myong-guk - Cha Jong-hyok, Ri Jun-il (Nam Song-chol 74), Pak Nam-chol, Ri Kwang-chon, Ji Yun-nam, Hong Yong-jo, Mun In-guk, Choe Kum-chol (An Chol-hyok 50), Pak Chol-jin (Pak Nam-chol 70), Kim Yong-jun (Ri Chol-myong 38).

All over...Iturra

half. Officials did not halt the game despite a strong tremor measuring 6.4 being felt by the crowd. Chile was hit by an earthquake in February when hundreds of people were killed.

Debutant central defender Sebastian Toro of Colo Colo and Dinamo Zagreb midfielder Pedro Morales were the scorers in a 2-0 victory.

Meanwhile, Universidad de Chile midfielder Manuel Iturra was sent-off just two minutes after coming on as a sub in the 1-0 friendly defeat against Mexico and subsequently dropped from Chile's preliminary World Cup squad.

COLOMBIA

Gomez takes over

Hernan Dario Gomez, who led Ecuador to their first World Cup finals in 2002, succeeded Eduardo Lara for his second spell as Colombia coach.

New challenge...Gomez

EGYPT

Exclusion zone

FIFA has ruled the Pharaohs must stage their first two home qualifiers for the 2014 World Cup finals 100km from Cairo after the Algeria team were attacked in November.

Three opposition players were injured when their bus was stoned on its way from the airport to the team hotel prior to a World Cup 2010 qualifier.

Sunday, May 16

May 16 - Mexico City
Mexico 1 (A Medina 13)
Chile 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 100,000. **Ref:** Geiger (USA)
Mexico: G Ochoa - Aguilar, Osorio, F Rodriguez (Moreno 70), Salcido, Torrado, Juarez, Guardado (Bautista 63), A Medina (Vela 55), Blanco (Barrera 55), Hernandez.
Chile: Marin - Vidal, Ponce, I Fuentes, Cereceda (Jara 46), Fuenzalida (Castro 75), Millar, Fernandez, Valdes (Beausejour 46), Valdivia, Morales (Iturra 58). *Sent off: Iturra 60min.*

May 16 - Nelspruit
South Africa 4 (Tshabalala 23, Mphela 30, 34, Parker 89)
Thailand 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Nguluwe (Mwi)
South Africa: Khune (Josephs 67) - Sangweni (Booth 74), Thwala (Mdledle 65), Khumalo, Gaxa, Tshabalala, Modise, Letsholonyane (Davids 65), Khuboni, Moriri (Parker 63), Mphela (Nomvete 74).
Thailand: Kawin (Sintaveechai 46) - Suttinan, Nattapong (Jetsada 87), Chonratit (Phaitoon 71), Chayanan, Panupong, Puritat, Sutee (Piyachart 46), Therdsak, Narongchai, Teeratep (Kringkhai 70).

May 16 - Seoul
South Korea 2 (Lee Seung-yeoul 72, Lee Chung-yong 84)
Ecuador 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 62,209. **Ref:** Wongkamdee (Tha)
South Korea: Jung Sung-ryong - Cho Yong-hyung (Hwang Jae-won 46), Kwak Tae-hwi, Oh Beom-seok (Cha Du-ri 46), Kim Dong-jin, Ki Sung-yong (Koo Ja-cheol 72), Shin Hyung-min, Kim Jae-sung, Park Ji-sung (Lee Chung-yong 46), Lee Dong-gook (Lee Seung-yeoul 66), Yeom Ki-hun (Kim Bo-kyung 81).
Ecuador: Elizaga - Ibarra, Hurtado, De la Cruz (P Quinonez 77), Fleitas, Nazareno, Minda (Rojas 78), Arroyo, Hidalgo, M Quinonez (Preciado 46), Kaviedes.

Tuesday, May 18

May 18 - Sana'a
Yemen 0
Oman 1 (Manaa 24)
HT: 0-1
Part of the Unity Cup, which also featured two non-FIFA representative teams

Wednesday, May 19

May 19 - Klagenfurt
Austria 0
Croatia 1 (Bilic 86)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Blom (Hol)
Austria: Macho - Prodl, Dragovic, Ortlechner, Fuchs, Harnik (Klein 39), Schiemer, Junuzovic, Korkmaz (Drazan 73), Janko, Wallner (Leitgeb 63).
Croatia: Subasic - Srna, Schildenfeld, Simunic, Strinic, Vukojevic, Dujmovic (Pokrivac 78), Mandzukic, Modric, Petric (Bilic 60), Jelavic (Gabric 67).

May 19 - Brussels
Belgium 2 (Lepoint 89, Kompany 90+1)
Bulgaria 1 (Popov 31)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Weiner (Ger)
Belgium: Gillet - Alderweireld (Ciman 63), Kompany, Lombaerts, Van Damme (Deschacht 63), Defour (Mirallas 83), Vertonghen (Thijs 46), Buffel, Dembele (Lepoint 46), Hazard, Lukaku (Benteke 63).
Bulgaria: Mihaylov - Angelov, I Ivanov, Manolev, Milanov, Georgiev, Peev (Ivan Stoyanov 90+2), S Petrov (Nikolov 87), Popov (Kamburov 68), Yankov, Bozhinov (Rangelov 61).

May 19 - Ajaccio, Corsica
Gabon 3 (P-E Aubameyang 16, Labo og 27, Do Marcolino 80)
Togo 0
HT: 2-0
Part of the Corsica Cup, which also featured two non-FIFA representative teams

Thursday, May 20

May 20 - Oranjestad
Aruba 0
Venezuela 3 (Chourio 10, 31, Farias 50)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Jauregui (DuA)
Aruba: Werleman (Dania 76) - R Tromp, De Lecca, Lopez (Sanchez 55), Nunez, Ridderbos (Hassel 46), Schwengle (Paesch 70), Ruiz, Croes, L Tromp (Rodriguez 53), M Escalona. *Sent off: De Lecca 36min.*
Venezuela: Morales (Valdes 46) - Mendoza (Villarroel 53), Vizcarrondo, Perozo, Pernia (Rojas 55), A Flores, Di Giorgi, F Flores (Blanco 66), Orozco (Pena 60), Chourio, Farias.

Friday, May 21

May 21 - Schwaz, Austria
DR Congo 0
Saudi Arabia 2 (Al Fraidi 33, Al Numare 74)
HT: 0-1

May 21 - Tallinn
Estonia 2 (Oper 5, Post 55)
Finland 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 5,650. **Ref:** Vad (Hun)
Estonia: Pareiko (Kotenko 46) - Sidorenkov, Rahn, Stepanov, Kams (Palatu 84), Dmitrijev, Vassiljev, Kruglov (Post 46), S Puri (Barengrub 90), Oper (Purje 63), Zelinski (Konsa 17).
Finland: Lehtovaara (Hradecky 46) - Moisander, Lampi, Nyman, Sparv, Hetemaj (R Eremenko 46), Savolainen (Heikkinen 46), Porokara, Litmanen (Vayrynen 46), Aaritalo (Forssell 81), Makela (Pukki 46).

Saturday, May 22

May 22 - Harrison, USA
Czech Republic 1 (M Cerny 81)
Turkey 2 (Arda 31, Nihat 48)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 16,371. **Ref:** Geiger (USA)
Czech Republic: Cech - Hubschman, Kusnir, Mazuch (Lafata 63), Rajnoch, Holek (Polak 46), Plasil (Skacel 77), Pudil, J Cerny (Sionko 46), Fenin (M Cerny 63), Necid (Pekhart 77).
Turkey: Volkan Demirel - Sabri, Servet, Emre Asik (Gokhan Zan 9; Emre Gungor 65), Caglar, Selcuk Sahin (Selcuk Inan 77), Emre Belozoglu, Okan (Volkan Sen 9; Kazim-Richards 46), Arda (Mehmet Topal 82), Halil Altintop (Semih 46), Nihat (Turgay 57).

Sunday, May 23

May 23 - Osijek
Croatia 2 (Rakitic 45, Gabric 81)
Wales 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 12,000. **Ref:** Vincic (Sln)
Croatia: Pletikosa - Srna (Vida 75), Lovren, Simunic, Strinic, Vukojevic (Dujmovic 65), Rakitic (Pokrivac 77), Mandzukic (Badelj 90), Modric, Petric (Gabric 46), Jelavic (Bilic 46).
Wales: Hennessey (Myhill 46) - Gunter (Ribeiro 81), Nyatanga, Williams, Morgan, Ricketts, Stock (Bradley 57), Edwards, Dorman (Taylor 62), Church (Vokes 72), Earnshaw (Robson-Kanu 72).

Monday, May 24

May 24 - Buenos Aires
Argentina 5 (M Rodriguez 16, 32, Di Maria 37, Tevez 63, Aguero 71)
Canada 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 60,000. **Ref:** Rivera (Per)
Argentina: Romero - Gutierrez, N Burdisso, Otamendi, Heinze (C Rodriguez 59), M Rodriguez (Veron 46), Mascherano (Bolatti 59), Pastore (Garce 74), Di Maria, Higuain (Palermo 68), Tevez (Aguero 70).
Canada: Onstad - Stalteri, Hainault, Hastings (Straith 79), Klukowski, Ledgerwood (Peters 55), Imhof, Johnson (Pacheco 84), De Rosario (Ademolu 87), Friend (Jackson 65), Simpson.

May 24 - Melbourne
Australia 2 (Vidosic 57, Holman 90+3)
New Zealand 1 (Killen 16)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 55,659. **Ref:** Salazar (USA)
Australia: Federici (Jones 46) - Milligan, Neill, Moore (Beauchamp 46), Carney, Culina, Grella (Jedinak 46), Bresciano (Valeri 46), Cahill (Holman 46), Vidosic (Oar 78), McDonald (Rukavytsya 71).
New Zealand: Paston - Vicelich (Boyens 51), Sigmund, Nelsen, Lochhead (Smith 59), Brown (McGlinchey 46), Elliott, Bertos (Reid 33), Killen (Wood 66), Fallon, Smeltz (Brockie 67).

May 24 - London
England 3 (King 17, Crouch 34, G Johnson 47)
Mexico 1 (Franco 45)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 88,638. **Ref:** Toma (Jap)
England: Green (Hart 46) - G Johnson, Ferdinand (Carragher 46), King, Baines, Walcott (Lennon 77), Gerrard, Carrick (Huddlestone 61), Milner (A Johnson 85), Crouch (Defoe 46), Rooney.
Mexico: O Perez - Juarez, Aguilar (Barrera 52), Marquez, Salcido, Osorio, Torrado, F Rodriguez, G Dos Santos (Blanco 72), Franco (Hernandez 46), Vela (Guardado 62).

May 24 - Saitama
Japan 0
South Korea 2 (Park Ji-sung 6, Park Chu-young pen 90)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 57,873. **Ref:** Attwell (Eng)
Japan: Narazaki - Nakazawa, Konno, Nagatomo, S Nakamura (Morimoto 63), Endo (Komano 79), Abe, Hasebe, Honda (K Nakamura 72), Okubo (Yano 87), Okazaki.
South Korea: Jung Sung-ryong - Kwak Tae-hwi, Lee Young-pyo, Lee Jung-soo, Cha Du-ri (Oh Beom-seok 67), Ki Sung-yong (Kim Bo-kyung 76), Kim Jung-woo, Park Ji-sung (Lee Seung-yeoul 76), Lee Chung-yong, Yeom Ki-hun (Kim Nam-il 46), Lee Keun-ho (Park Chu-young 46).

May 24 - Covilha
Portugal 0
Cape Verde Islands 0
Ref: Clos Gomez (Spa)
Portugal: Eduardo - Paulo Ferreira (Miguel 69), Bruno Alves, Ricardo Carvalho (Ricardo Costa 46), Fabio Coentrao, Deco (Danny 57), Pedro Mendes (Tiago 57), Miguel Veloso (Raul Meireles 46), Nani, Liedson (Hugo Almeida 46), Cristiano Ronaldo.
Cape Verde: Fock - Ricardo, Fernando Varela, Nando, Stopira, Dario, Marco Soares, Babanco (Heldon 58), Valter (Vitor Moreno 69), Lito (Tony Varela 72), Dady (Semedo 25; Ze Luis 90).

May 24 - Johannesburg
South Africa 1 (Sangweni 20)
Bulgaria 1 (Bozhinov 31)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Fagla (Tog)
South Africa: Khune - Gaxa, Sangweni (Mokoena 46), Khumalo, Thwala (Masilela 46), Modise (Parker 69), Letsholonyane (Dikgacoi 46), Khuboni, Tshabalala (Cale 78), Moriri (Nomvete 63), Mphela.
Bulgaria: Mihaylov - Minev, Angelov, Georgiev (Nikolov 90), Yankov (Dimitrov 60), Bozhinov (Rangelov 55), Peev (Vidanov 89), Manolev, I Ivanov, S Petrov, Popov (Kamburov 55).

Tuesday, May 25

May 25 - Yerevan
Armenia 3 (Henrik Mkhitaryan 7, Manucharyan pen 18, 28)
Uzbekistan 1 (Geynrikh 67)
HT: 3-0

May 25 - Linz, Austria
Georgia 0
Cameroon 0
Att: 4,000
Georgia: Revishvili - Khizanishvili, Amisulashvili, Asatiani, Kandelaki (Shashiashvili 89), Lobzhanidze, Kobiashvili, Menteshashvili (Aptsiauri 58), Ananidze (Gelashvili 58), A Iashvili (Merebashvili 76), Dvalishvili (Barabadze 69).
Cameroon: N'Dy Assembe (Tignyemb 46) - R Song (Geremi 46), A Song (Aboona 46), Nkoulou (Matip 46), Boukar, Makoun (Mandjeck 46), Ndjeng (Bassong 46), Mevoungou (Nguemo 46), Webo (Chedjou 46), Kouemaha (Aboubakar 46), Idrissou.

May 25 - Altach, Austria
Greece 2 (Katsouranis 2, Charisteas 49)
North Korea 2 (Jong Tae-se 23, 52)
HT: 1-1
Greece: Sifakis (Tzorvas 46) - Spiropoulos, Vyntra (Seitaridis 46), Moras, Kyrgiakos (Papadopoulos 46), Tziolis, Katsouranis, Karagounis (Patsatzoglou 61), Salpigidis, Gekas (Kapetanos 46), Samaras (Charisteas 46).
North Korea: Ri Myong-guk (Kim Myong-gil 46) - Cha Jong-hyok, Pak Nam-chol, Ri Kwang-chon, Ji Yun-nam, Hong Yong-jo, Mun In-guk (Kim Kum-il 84), Pak Chol-jin, Nam Song-chol (Ri Jun-il 46), An Young-hak, Jong Tae-se.

May 25 - Podgorica
Montenegro 0
Albania 1 (Salihi 79)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 6,000. **Ref:** Strahonja (Cro)
Montenegro: M Bozovic - Pavicevic, Dzudovic, Batak, Jovanovic, Novakovic (Delibasic 74), Kascelan (Zverotic 46), Vukcevic, V Bozovic (Pekovic 62), Dalovic (Beciraj 70), Vucinic.
Albania: Hidi - Dallku, Cana, Curri, Agolli, Lila (Vila 89), Bulku (Lika 84), Duro (Muzaka 64), Skela (Hyka 18), Salihi (Bakaj 82), Bogdani (Kapllani 64).

May 25 - Wattens, Austria
Nigeria 0
Saudi Arabia 0
Att: 1,000. **Ref:** Einwaller (Aut)
Nigeria: Ejide - Shittu, Yobo, Echiejile, Suswan (Kaita 46), K Uche (I Uche 46), Yussuf (Odiah 80), Lukman, Kanu (Martins 60), Anichebe (Obinna 56), Obasi (Utaka 74).
Saudi Arabia: Abdullah - Al Moussa, Al Dosari (Al Numare 86), Shuhail, Hawsawi, Khairat, Ateef (Autef 64), Al Ghannam (Al Rishani 80), Abbas (Khariri 64), Abduradyah (Saran 69), Al Shehri (Al Fraidi 64).

May 25 - Dublin
Republic of Ireland 2 (Doyle 7, Lawrence 39)
Paraguay 1 (Barrios 58)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 16,722. **Ref:** Laperriere (Swi)
Rep Ireland: Westwood - Kelly, McShane, St Ledger, O'Shea, Lawrence (Foley 82), Whelan (Green 69), Andrews, Duff (Fahey 77), Keane (Sheridan 63), Doyle (Long 87).
Paraguay: Bobadilla - Vera (Bonet 65), Alcaraz, Caniza, Da Silva, Morel (Torres 65), Santana (Aquino 82), Riveros (Ortigoza 65), Gamarra, Santa Cruz (Martinez 77), Barrios.

Captain...England's Connor Coady

ENGLAND

Friendlies announced

Fabio Capello's side will face Hungary at Wembley on August 11 in a friendly, ahead of their opening Euro 2012 qualifier at home to Bulgaria on September 3.

England will also play Thailand in June 2011 to commemorate the 65th anniversary of Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej's accession to the Thai throne. Thailand are coached by former England captain Bryan Robson.

England Under-17s came from a goal behind to beat Spain 2-1 in the Final to win their first European title at this age level.

Andre Wisdom's own goal put Spain ahead, but the Liverpool defender made amends with the equaliser before Ipswich Town's Connor Wickham scored the winner.

Floored...China (in red) beat France

FRANCE

Coach creates record

Raymond Domenech was in charge of the national side for a record-breaking 76th time as France took on China.

Playing on the French island of Reunion for the first time in *Les Bleus* history, France were beaten by a 68th minute free-kick from Deng Zhuoxiang - his side's first shot on target of the game.

May 25 - Kharkiv
Ukraine 4 (Aliyev pen 11, 17, Shevchenko pen 68, 78)
Lithuania 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Sukhina (Rus)
Ukraine: Horyainov - Mykhalyk (Rusol 83), Chygrynskyi, Rotan (Fedetskyi 83), Kobin, Konoplyanka, Husiev (Polyovyi 75), Tymoshchuk, Aliyev (Devic 70), Milevskyi (Oliynyk 52), Shevchenko (Selezniov 80).
Lithuania: Arlauskis (Karcemarskas 46) - Klimavicius, Alunderis, Radavicius, Stankevicius, Sernas (Kalonas 63), Ivaskevicius, Galkevicius, Luksa (Kavaliauskas 82), Novikovas (Poskus 55), Danilevicius.

May 25 - East Hartford
United States 2 (Edu 17, Gomez 65)
Czech Republic 4 (Sivok 44, Polak 58, Fenin 78, Necid 90+2)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 36,218. **Ref:** Morales (Mex)
United States: Guzan - Cherundolo, Onyewu (Bedoya 65), Goodson, Bornstein (Pearce 46), Holden, Torres (Kljestan 46), Edu, Beasley (Rogers 46), Johnson (Ching 46), Buddle (Gomez 46).
Czech Republic: Cech - Kusnir, Rajnoch, Sivok, Sionko (Moravek 85), Polak (Holek 90), Pudil, Plasil (Limbersky 90+1), Hubschman, Fenin (M Cerny 78), Lafata (Necid 67).

Wednesday, May 26

May 26 - Calama
Chile 3 (Sanchez 52, 83, Valdivia 84)
Zambia 0
HT: 0-0
Chile: Bravo - I Fuentes (Isla 46), P Contreras, Jara (Beausejour 46), Carmona, Cereceda (Estrada 46), Fierro, Valdivia, Orellana, Paredes (Sanchez 46), Tello.
Zambia: Kakonje - Kasonde, Himoonde, Sunzu, Mbola, Njovu, Kalaba, Sakuwaha (C Mulenga 42), C Katongo, F Katongo, Kola (Singuluma 69).

May 26 - Tallinn
Estonia 0
Croatia 0
Att: 4,800. **Ref:** Svendsen (Den)
Estonia: Pareiko - Sisov, Rahn, Piiroja, Sidorenkov, Vunk (Post 78), Dmitrijev, S Puri, Kink (Purje 78), Vassiljev, Oper (Saag 60).
Croatia: Subasic - Schildenfeld, Pranjic, Rakitic, Pokrivac, Gabric, Dujmovic (Vukojevic 80), Badelj (Buljat 88), Vida, Cale (Strinic 46), Lovren (Vucko 46).

May 26 - Lens
France 2 (Sequeira og 31, Valbuena 83)
Costa Rica 1 (Hernandez 12)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 40,000. **Ref:** Bezborodov (Rus)
France: Mandanda - Sagna, Gallas (Squillaci 46), Abidal, Evra, Gourcuff, Toulalan (A Diarra 46), Malouda (Diaby 77), Govou (Valbuena 66), Anelka (Henry 46), Ribery (Gignac 83).
Costa Rica: Navas - Myrie (Gamboa 65), Sequeira, Segares, Diaz, Azofeifa, Barrantes, Ruiz (Madrigal 90), Hernandez (Bolanos 56), Urena (Estrada 76), Martinez (Parks 42).

May 26 - Freiburg, Germany
Holland 2 (Van Persie 17, 41)
Mexico 1 (Hernandez 74)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 22,000. **Ref:** Grafe (Ger)
Holland: Stekelenburg - Boulahrouz, Heitinga, Mathijsen, Braafheid (Anita 46), De Zeeuw, Schaars (Engelaar 46), Kuyt, Van der Vaart (Elia 71), Afellay, Van Persie (Huntelaar 64).
Mexico: Ochoa - Aguilar (Vela 55), Moreno, Magallon, Torres, Castro, Torrado (J Dos Santos 89), Guardado (Juarez 46), Medina (G Dos Santos 55), Hernandez, Blanco (Barrera 46).

May 26 - Seekirchen, Austria
Moldova 1 (Cojocari 81)
Azerbaijan 1 (Mammadov 21)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 200. **Ref:** Lechner (Aut)
Moldova: Stanislav Namasco - Cheltuiala (Ichim 80), Bulgaru, Epureanu, Bolohan, Cebotaru (Savinov 71), Tigirlas (Sidorenco 66), Josan (Suvorov 71), Calincov (Cojocari 46), Doros (Sofroni 55), Dadu.
Azerbaijan: Aghayev - Shukurov, Allahverdiyev (Malikov 74), Chertoganov, Mammadov (Abbasov 69), Aliyev, Sadigov, Abishov (Amirguliyev 78), Medvedev (J Huseynov 62), Levin (V Huseynov 46), Guliyev.

May 26 - New Britain, USA
Northern Ireland 0
Turkey 2 (Sercan 47, Semih 71)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Vaughn (USA)
Northern Ireland: Blayney - Little, McGivern (Coates 76), McAuley, Craigan, Evans, Garrett (Lawrie 80), Patterson (Magennis 60), Mulgrew, Braniff (McArdle 60), Gorman (Bryan 66).
Turkey: Onur - Servet, Ibrahim Toraman, Caner (Ismail 73), Sabri, Nuri (Mehmet Topal 46), Selcuk Inan (Emre Belozoglu 66), Ozan (Arda 66), Kazim-Richards (Semih 62), Tuncay, Hamit Altintop (Sercan 46).

May 26 - Montevideo
Uruguay 4 (Forlan 14, A Pereira 36, Abreu 75, 80)
Israel 1 (Rafaelov 30)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 50,000. **Ref:** Osses (Chl)
Uruguay: Muslera - Godin, Lugano (Lodeiro 46), Scotti, M Pereira, Perez (Arevalo 62), Gargano (Eguren 46), A Pereira, I Gonzalez (Caceres 71), Suarez (Cavani 62), Forlan (Abreu 46).
Israel: Aouate - Saban (Ottman 77), Keinan, Maimon, Ziv, Natcho (Barda 73), Yadin (Biton 54), Rafaelov, Sahar (Shechter 64), Vermouth (Melikson 60), Colautti (Arbeitman 57).

Thursday, May 27

May 27 - Villach, Austria
Belarus 2 (Putsilo 56, 60)
Honduras 2 (De Leon 26, Welcome 71)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 400. **Ref:** Eisner (Aut)
Belarus: Zhevnov - Sosnovsky, Martynovich, Molosh, Yurevich, Tigorev, Kislyak (Verkhovtsov 88), Omelyanchuk, Krivets (Rodionov 46), Putsilo, Kornilenko (Voronkov 77).
Honduras: N Valladares - Mendoza, O Chavez (Johnny Palacios 57), Bernardez (Figueroa 77), Izaguirre, Garcia (Alvarez 70), W Martinez (R Nunez 58), Thomas, De Leon (Espinoza 83), Suazo, Pavon (Welcome 69).

May 27 - Aalborg
Denmark 2 (Christian Poulsen 27, Enevoldsen 90)
Senegal 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 14,112. **Ref:** Nijhuis (Hol)
Denmark: Christensen (Christiansen 46) - S Poulsen (Mtiliga 46), Kjaer, Agger, Kvist, Christian Poulsen (Martin Jorgensen 46), Kahlenberg, J Poulsen (Enevoldsen 61), Beckmann (Krohn-Dehli 67), Tomasson, Rommedahl (Eriksen 73).
Senegal: C Ndiaye - Faty (Sarr 70), Mangane, Diakhate, Mendy, N Ndiaye, Tavares, Ndaw (A Faye 76), Sow (Niang 57), S Camara (P D Cisse 65), M B Diouf.

May 27 - Johannesburg
South Africa 2 (Modise pen 18, Mphela pen 58)
Colombia 1 (G Moreno pen 21)
HT: 1-1
South Africa: Khune (Josephs 46) - Gaxa, Khumalo, Mokoena, Masilela (Thwala 55), Letsholonyane (Pienaar 46), Khuboni (Dikgacoi 46), Modise, Moriri (McCarthy 64), Tshabalala, Mphela (Nomvete 89).
Colombia: Ospina - C Zapata, Yepes, Armero, J Martinez (D Moreno 89), G Moreno (Pabon 88), Guarin (Valencia 32), Aguilar, Ibarbo (Anchico 46), Zuniga, Ramos (Rodallega 81).

Friday, May 28

May 28 - Dublin
Republic of Ireland 3 (Green 31, Keane 52, pen 85)
Algeria 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 16,800. **Ref:** Braamhaar (Hol)
Rep Ireland: Westwood (Murphy 86) - Kelly, O'Shea (O'Dea 36), St Ledger, Cunningham, Lawrence (Long 86), Green, Whelan (Andrews 75), Duff (Fahey 65), Keane, Doyle (Sheridan 72).
Algeria: Chaouchi (M'Bolhi 66) - Guedioura, Halliche, Bellaid, Mesbah, Ziani, Lacen, Mansouri (Kadir 66), Belhadj (Boudebouz 66), Djebbour (Saifi 58), Ghezzal (Abdoun 77).

Saturday, May 29

May 29 - Villach, Austria
Azerbaijan 1 (Mammadov 90)
Macedonia 3 (Trickovski 8, Sadigov og 66, Gjurovski 88)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Drabek (Aut)
Azerbaijan: Agayev - Shukurov, Allahverdiyev, Chertoganov, Aliyev (Abbasov 75), Sadigov (Ramim 75), Abishov, Kuluzade, Medvedev, Levin (Mammadov 46), Guliyev (V Huseynov 46).
Macedonia: Pacovski - Popov, I Mitreski (Sedloski 54), Georgievski (Sikov 72), Sumulikoski, Kurtisi (Iljoski 75), Ristic (Gjurovski 59), Despotovski, Lazarevski (Todorovski 71), Grncarov (Noveski 65), Trickovski.

May 29 - Budapest
Hungary 0
Germany 3 (Podolski pen 5, Gomez 69, Cacau 73)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 14,000. **Ref:** Larsen (Den)
Hungary: Kiraly - Bodnar (Laczko 85), Vanczak, Horvath, Bodor (Tozser 46), Vadocz, Juhasz (Szelesi 71), Huszti (Priskin 71), Koman (Lazok 88), Dzsudzsak, Torghelle (Nemeth 62).
Germany: Neuer - Boateng, Mertesacker, A Friedrich (Badstuber 71), Westermann, Khedira (Aogo 46), Kroos (Marin 62), Trochowski (Jansen 62), Ozil (Cacau 46), Podolski, Klose (Gomez 62).

May 29 - Reykjavik
Iceland 4 (Helguson pen 32, 51, V Gunnarsson pen 87, Sigthorsson 89)
Andorra 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 2,567
Iceland: Gunnleifsson - Fjoluson, I Sigurdsson (Adalsteinsson 76), Ottesen, O I Skulason (E G Jonsson 46), R Gislason (V Gunnarsson 60), Helguson (Sigthorsson 72), Fridgeirsson, B Bjarnason, G Sigurdsson (Smarason 60), J B Gudmundsson (Thorsteinsson 79).

May 29 - Anif, Austria
Moldova 2 (Tigirlas 14, Bulgaru 80)
United Arab Emirates 3 (Jumaa 26, Al Shehhi 31, Khalil 89)
HT: 1-2. **Ref:** Schortenhofer (Aut)
Moldova: Gaiduchevici - Cebotaru, Epureanu, Savinov (Bulgaru 63), Bolohan, Onica (Suvorov 68), Cojocari (Calincov 58), Zmeu, Tigirlas, Josan (Antoniuc 76), Dadu (Sofroni 75).
UAE: Khasif - Al Kamali, Jumaa, Jaber, Fayez, Abdulrahman, Khafer, Khamees (Al Kathiry 83), Awana (Masaud 46), Al Shehhi (Bargash 75), Al Kass (Khalil 46).

May 29 - Oslo
Norway 2 (Grindheim 43, Gamst Pedersen 89)
Montenegro 1 (Vucinic 81)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 13,132. **Ref:** Erikson (Swe)
Norway: Jarstein (Pettersen 89) - Hogli (Hoiland 46), Hangeland, Waehler, Parr, Huseklepp (Moldskred 78), Jenssen (Skjelbred 57), Hauger, Grindheim (Brenne 90), Gamst Pedersen, Carew.
Montenegro: Poleksic - Pavicevic (Kascelan 70), Dzudovic, Batak (Tomasevic 46), Jovanovic (Pejovic 67), S Vukcevic (Delibasic 59), Novakovic (Zverotic 56), Pekovic, V Bozovic (Beciraj 87), Dalovic, Vucinic.

May 29 - Kielce
Poland 0
Finland 0
Att: 14,200. **Ref:** Avram (Rom)
Poland: Tyton - Piszczek, Wojtkowiak, Zewlakow (Sadlok 46), Dudka, Blaszczykowski (Nowak 85), Jodlowiec, Matuszczyk (Peszko 61), Mierzejewski (Rybus 75), Jelen (Sobiech 89), R Lewandowski (Malecki 90).
Finland: Fredrikson - Lampi (Jalasto 82), Parviainen, Heikkinen, Moisander, Johansson, Sparv, R Eremenko (Turunen 90), Porokara (Forssell 66), Hamalainen (Perovuo 81), Litmanen (Roiha 71).

May 29 - Klagenfurt, Austria
Serbia 0
New Zealand 1 (Smeltz 22)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Drachta (Aut)
Serbia: Stojkovic (Djuricic 46) - Rukavina, Vidic, Subotic, Obradovic (Kolarov 21), Kuzmanovic (Mrdja 59), Milijas (Kacar 46), Z Tosic, Ninkovic (Petrovic 46), Zigic, Pantelic (Lazovic 66).
New Zealand: Paston - Lochhead, Reid, Nelsen, Elliott, Smeltz, Bertos, Fallon, Smith, Wood (Brockie 61), Christie.

May 29 - Klagenfurt, Austria
Slovakia 1 (Kopunek 6)
Cameroon 1 (Enoh 83)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Lechner (Aut)
Slovakia: Kuciak (Pernis 85) - Pekarik (Jakubko 88), Skrtel, Durica, Cech, Kopunek, Kozak (Svento 46), Kucka (Zabavnik 77), Stoch (Weiss 46), Hamsik, Jendrisek (Sestak 46).
Cameroon: Hamidou - Chedjou (Geremi 67), Nkoulou, Bassong, Assou-Ekotto, Aboubakar (Ndjeng 67), A Song (Matip 86), Enoh, Makoun (Mandjeck 46), Emana (Kouemaha 73), Webo.

May 29 - Innsbruck, Austria
Spain 3 (Villa 31, Xabi Alonso 58, Llorente 90)
Saudi Arabia 2 (Hawsawi 17, Al Sahlawi 73)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 7,500. **Ref:** Einwaller (Aut)
Spain: Casillas - Sergio Ramos (Capdevila 61), Pique, Puyol (Marchena 61), Arbeloa, Busquets, Xavi (Javi Martinez 74), Xabi Alonso, Iniesta (Pedro 61), Silva (Jesus Navas 61), Villa (Llorente 71).
Saudi Arabia: Abdullah - Shuhail, Hawsawi, Al Mousa, Al Saeed (Khairat 89), Khariri, Ateef (Al Ghannam 84), Autef (Asiri 69), Al Numare (Al Rhisani 86), Al Fraidi (Al Sheri 61), Hazazi (Al Sahlawi 65).

May 29 - Stockholm
Sweden 4 (Toivonen 44, Olsson 68, 83, Berg 90+2)
Bosnia-Herzegovina 2 (Salihovic 47, Zec 90)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 22,600. **Ref:** Grafe (Ger)

HAITI

Football returns

The national team were beaten 4-0 by Argentina in their first game since the earthquake in January that killed nearly a quarter of a million people, left a million more homeless and destroyed the infrastructure of the poverty-stricken nation.

"Football is an integral part of our society," said Haiti FA chief Yves Jean-Bart. "That's why it's important that we get our football activities up and running – to bring a little serenity and joy."

Back...Haiti (in red) in action

INDONESIA

New man in charge

Alfred Riedl has agreed a three-year contract to take charge of the country's senior and under-23 teams.

The 60-year-old Austrian – who has previously had spells in charge of his home nation, Liechtenstein, Palestine, Vietnam and Laos – succeeds Benny Dollo as national coach and Alberto Bica as head of the under-23 side.

PARAGUAY

Barrios scores on debut

Argentina-born Lucas Barrios scored on his debut for the World Cup finalists as they lost 2-1 to the Republic of Ireland.

On target...Barrios

Sweden: Isaksson - S Larsson, Mellberg, Majstorovic, Safari, Wernblom, A Svensson, Wilhelmsson (Lustig 75), Kallstrom (Berg 75), Bajrami (Olsson 66), Toivonen.
Bosnia-Herzegovina: Begovic - Pandza (Nadarevic 46), Spahic (Jahic 66), Mravac, Salihovic, Muratovic (Alispahic 46), Medunjanin (Ibricic 77), Misimovic, Pjanic, Muslimovic (Ibisevic 64), Dzeko (Zec 80).

May 29 - Lviv
Ukraine 3 (Aliyev 15, Konoplyanka 74, Tamas og 79)
Romania 2 (Tamas 53, D Niculae 63)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 23,000. **Ref:** Kralovec (Cze)
Ukraine: Pyatov - Mykhalyk, Chygrynskyi, Oshchypko (Polyovyi 62), Kobin (Oliynyk 58), Husiev (Fedetskyi 86), Aliyev (Selezniov 89), Tymoshchuk, Konoplyanka, Shevchenko (Khudobyak 90), Milevskyi (Rotan 83).
Romania: Lobont - Maftei, Tamas, Chivu, Rat, Roman (Deac 77), Radoi, Ghioane (Cocis 46), Tanase (Radut 87), Bilasco (Mazilu 84), Cristea (D Niculae 46).

May 29 - Philadelphia
United States 2 (Altidore 58, Dempsey 75)
Turkey 1 (Arda 27)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 55,407. **Ref:** Petrescu (Can)
United States: Howard - Spector (Cherundolo 46), Bocanegra (Bornstein 75), Bradley, Dempsey, Donovan, Clark (Torres 46), DeMerit, Feilhaber (Findley 46), Altidore (Holden 81), Goodson (Onyewu 46).
Turkey: Volkan Demirel - Sabri, Servet, Gokhan Zan, Caglar, Emre Belozoglu, Selcuk Inan (Mehmet Topal 53), Hamit Altintop (Semih 73), Tuncay (Nihat 78), Arda (Ozan 90), Kazim-Richards (Sercan 62).

May 29 - Merida
Venezuela 1 (Chourio 44)
Canada 1 (McCallum 90+3)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Buitrago (Col)
Venezuela: Morales - Rincon (Pernia 82), Vizcarrondo, Perozo, Fuenmayor, F Flores, Di Giorgi, A Flores (Pena 56), Chourio (Blanco 86), Orozco (Farias 75), Fedor (Rivas 90+2).
Canada: Wagenaar (Al Shaibani 70) - Stalteri, Straith, Klukowski (Sidra 64), Hastings, Dunfield (Beaulieu-Bourgault 78), Wassey (Ademolu 61), Ledgerwood (Zavarise 84), Pacheco (McCallum 81), Nakajima-Farran, Jackson.

Sunday, May 30

May 30 - Kufstein, Austria
Belarus 1 (Kislyak 53)
South Korea 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 300. **Ref:** Brugger (Aut)
Belarus: Amelchenko (Veremko 46) - Yurevich (Shitov 46), Molosh, Sosnovsky (Lentsevich 89), Martynovich, Omelyanchuk, Tigorev, Putsilo, Kislyak, Kornilenko (Krivets 46), Rodionov (Voronkov 75).
South Korea: Lee Woon-jae - Cha Du-ri, Kim Dong-jin, Cho Yong-hyung, Kwak Tae-hwi (Lee Jung-soo 32), Park Ji-sung (Yeom Ki-hun 46), Park Chu-young (Lee Seung-yeoul 73), Shin Hyung-min, Lee Chung-yong (Kim Jae-sung 46), Ki Sung-yong (Kim Nam-il 46), Lee Keun-ho (Ahn Jung-hwan 46).

May 30 - Chillan
Chile 1 (Paredes 30)
Northern Ireland 0
HT: 1-0
Chile: Pinto - Vidal (Ross 76), I Fuentes, P Contreras, Cereceda, Isla, Estrada, Fernandez (F Gutierrez 89), Fierro, Paredes, M Gonzalez (Orellana 63).
Northern Ireland: Blayney (McGovern 46) - Little, McGivern (Coates 55), McAuley, Craigan (Lawrie 46), Evans, Garrett (McArdle 46), Patterson, Mulgrew, Gorman (Mageniss 73), Bryan (Braniff 46).

May 30 - Concepcion
Chile 3 (Suazo 19, Sanchez 49, Tello 90)
Israel 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Arias (Par)
Chile: Bravo - Ponce, Jara, Medel (Martinez 79), Tello, Carmona, Millar (Casanova 77), Valdivia (F Gutierrez 46), Beausejour, Suazo (Orellana 46), Sanchez (Campos 70).
Israel: Aouate - Saban (Danin 52), Maimon (Colautti 66), Strul (Ottman 46), Natcho, Vermouth (Golan 53), Barda (Arbeitman 53), Shechter (Rafaelov 59), Ziv, Yadin, Biton.

May 30 - Graz, Austria
England 2 (Tulio Tanaka og 72, Nakazawa og 83)
Japan 1 (Tulio Tanaka 6)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Eisner (Aut)
England: James (Hart 46) - G Johnson (Carragher 46), Ferdinand, Terry, A Cole, Walcott (Wright-Phillips 46), Huddlestone (Gerrard 46), Lampard, Lennon (Heskey 77), Rooney, Bent (J Cole 46).
Japan: Kawashima - Nakazawa, Tulio Tanaka, Nagatomo, Konno, Endo (Tamada 86), Hasebe, Abe, Honda, Okubo (Matsui 72), Okazaki (Morimoto 65).

May 30 - Bayreuth, Germany
Gambia 1 (Sohna 65)
Mexico 5 (Hernandez 17, 50, Bautista 58, 73, A Medina 80)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Brych (Ger)
Gambia: Touray - Darbo (Jammeh 86), Jawo, Kujabi, Sohna, Jarju, Mbye (Conateh 60), Ceesay (Samba 60), Sawaneh (Sosseh 60), Demba, Jallow.
Mexico: Michel - I Castro (Barrera 46), F Rodriguez, Moreno (Magallon 78), Salcido (Torres 78), Marquez, J Dos Santos, Guardado, Bautista, Vela (A Medina 56), Hernandez (Blanco 56).

May 30 - St Andrew's
Grenada 2 (K Bain 36, Julien 40)
Martinique 2 (Parsemain 13, Cilis 85)
HT: 2-1

May 30 - Evian-les-Bains, France
Ivory Coast 2 (Drogba 53, Bamba 73)
Paraguay 2 (Barrios 75, Torres 90)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 2,000. **Ref:** Bien (Fra)
Ivory Coast: Barry - Tiene, K Toure (Bamba 46), Zokora, Demel (Eboue 46), Y Toure, Tiote, Romaric (Fae 46), Kalou (Gervinho 46), Drogba (Doumbia 60), Dindane (Keita 66).
Paraguay: Villar - Veron (Bonet 78), J C Caceres, Da Silva, Torres, Martinez (Barrios 70), Ortigoza (Riveros 70), V Caceres, Estigarribia, Achucaro (Santa Cruz 70), Ledesma (Aquino 54).

May 30 - Milton Keynes, England
Nigeria 1 (Lukman 69)
Colombia 1 (Valdes 12)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Atkinson (Eng)
Nigeria: Enyeama - Afolabi, Odiah, Taiwo, Etuhu, Yussuf (Lukman 46), Kaita, Adeleye, Yakubu (Martins 46), Odemwingie (K Uche 62), Obinna (Utaka 75).
Colombia: Ospina - Velez, Valdes, Yepes (Zapata 63), Nunez, Valencia, Aguilar, D Moreno, Rodallega (Ramos 60), G Moreno (Anchico 60), Martinez (Pabon 83).

May 30 - Rades
Tunisia 1 (Jemaa 5)
France 1 (Gallas 63)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 50,000. **Ref:** Raii (Lby)
Tunisia: Mathlouthi (Kasraoui 46) - Ifa, Haggui, Jemal, Mikari (Meriah 85), Ben Khalfallah, Nafti (Ragued 71), Darragi (Benachour 59), Korbi, Msakni (Mouihbi 64), Jemaa (Chikhaoui 77).
France: Lloris - Sagna, Gallas (Squillaci 64), Abidal (Planus 46), Evra (Clichy 64), Gourcuff (Diaby 64), Toulalan, Malouda, Govou (Cisse 75), Anelka (Gignac 64), Ribery (Henry 46).

Monday, May 31

May 31 - Polokwane
South Africa 5 (Mphela pen 12, pen 56, Letsholonyane 26, Moriri 48, Parker 83)
Guatemala 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Chaibou (Ngr)
South Africa: Josephs - Ngcongca (Moon 46), Khumalo (Booth 64), Mokoena, Thwala, Letsholonyane (Sibaya 46), Dikgacoi, Modise (Moriri 46), Pienaar, Tshabalala (Parker 70), Mphela (Nomvete 64).
Guatemala: Guerra (Barrios 46) - Vides, Medina, Gallardo, Cabrera, Castillo, Romero (Montepeque 46), Trigueros, Rodriguez (Lopez 73), Ramirez (Caal 61), Guevara.

Tuesday, June 1

June 1 - Roodepoort, South Africa
Australia 1 (Kennedy 71)
Denmark 0
Att: 5,000. **Ref:** Bennett (SAf)
Australia: Schwarzer - Wilkshire, Neill, Moore (Beauchamp 76), Chipperfield (Carney 46), Culina, Grella (Jedinak 73), Garcia (Valeri 46), Cahill (Holman 46), Bresciano (Vidosic 73), Kennedy.
Denmark: Andersen - Jacobsen, Agger, Kroldrup, Mtiliga, Christian Poulsen (Martin Jorgensen 79), D Jensen (J Poulsen 46), Eriksen (Rommedahl 46), Kahlenberg (Beckmann 82), Enevoldsen (Gronkjaer 62), Tomasson (Larsen 62).

June 1 - Rotterdam
Holland 4 (Kuyt 30, Van der Vaart 72, Sneijder 80, Van Persie pen 87)
Ghana 1 (Gyan 78)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Moen (Nor)
Holland: Vorm (Boschker 46) - Van der Wiel, Heitinga, Mathijsen, Van Bronckhorst, De Jong, Van Bommel, Kuyt (Babel 73), Sneijder (Elia 83), Afellay (Van der Vaart 63), Van Persie.
Ghana: Kingson - Paintsil, Vorsah (John Mensah 46), Addy, Sarpei, Annan (Asamoah 77), D Boateng, Owusu-Abeyie (Adiyiah 46), Appiah (Tagoe 46), Muntari (D Ayew 46), Amoah (Gyan 46).

June 1 - Covilha
Portugal 3 (Raul Meireles 32, 47, Nani 81)
Cameroon 1 (Webo 69)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 12,000. **Ref:** Weiner (Ger)
Portugal: Eduardo - Paulo Ferreira (Miguel 46), Ricardo Carvalho, Bruno Alves (Rolando 63), Duda (Fabio Coentrao 63), Deco, Pedro Mendes (Ricardo Costa 73), Raul Meireles, Cristiano Ronaldo, Liedson (Danny 46), Simao (Nani 46).
Cameroon: Kameni - Mandjeck, Mbia, Nkoulou, Assou-Ekotto, Makoun (Bong 80), A Song (Nguemo 62), Enoh, Eto'o, Choupo-Moting (Idrissou 62), Emana (Webo 62). *Sent off: Eto'o 35min.*

June 1 - Sion
Switzerland 0
Costa Rica 1 (Parks 55)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 11,300. **Ref:** Buttimer (Ire)
Switzerland: Benaglio - Lichtsteiner, Senderos, Grichting (Von Bergen 46), Ziegler, Barnetta (Bunjaku 76), Huggel (Fernandes 61), Inler (Schwegler 61), Padalino (Shaqiri 63), Frei, Nkufo (Derdiyok 63).
Costa Rica: Navas - Myrie, Sequeira, Segares, Diaz, Ruiz (Mena 90), Barrantes (Paniagua 84), Azofeifa, Hernandez (Guzman 78), Bolanos, Parks (Urena 81).

Wednesday, June 2

June 2 - Tirana
Albania 1 (Salihi 44)
Andorra 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Meckarovski (Mac)
Albania: Hidi (Llani 90) - Lila, Bulku (Lika 57), Vangjeli (Muzaka 78), Vrapi (Bici 88), Agolli, Skela, Duro (Veliaj 88), Hyka (Xhihani 57), Kapllani (Bakaj 58), Salihi.

June 2 - Zell Am See, Austria
Azerbaijan 0
Honduras 0
Att: 500
Azerbaijan: Agayev - Sadigov, Yunisoglu, Allahverdiyev, Medvedev, Guluzade (Chertoganov 68), Abbasov, Nadirov (C Huseynov 46), Shukurov, Aliyev (Ramim 46), Mammadov (Amirjanovic 77). *Sent off: Yunisoglu 73min.*
Honduras: Canales - Figueroa (Chavez 46), Bernardez, Izaguirre, Mendoza, W Palacios (Espinoza 46), Guevara (Thomas 46), Suazo (Pavon 68), R Nunez, De Leon (Turcios 68), Alvarez (Garcia 77).

June 2 - Minsk
Belarus 0
Sweden 1 (Wilhelmsson 47)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 12,000. **Ref:** Nikolaev (Rus)
Belarus: Zhevnov - Yurevich (Bordachev 86), Martynovich, Sosnovsky (Verkhovtsov 70), Molosh (V Hleb 46), Kislyak, Omelyanchuk (Sivakov 76), Rodionov (Krivets 46), Tigorev, Putsilo, Kornilenko (Shitov 46).
Sweden: Isaksson - Lustig, Olsson, Granqvist, Wendt (Dorsin 46), Lantz, Wernbloom (Safari 85), S Larsson, Toivonen (Majstorovic 85), Wilhelmsson (Djuric 63), Berg (D Larsson 63).

June 2 - Winterthur, Switzerland
Greece 0
Paraguay 2 (Vera 9, Barrios 25)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Zimmerman (Swi)
Greece: Tzorvas - Seitaridis, Torosidis, Papadopoulos, Kyrgiakos (Vyntra 46), Tziolis, Katsouranis (Patsatzoglou 46), Ninis (Karagounis 46), Samaras, Salpigidis (Charisteas 46), Kapetanos (Spiropoulos 75).
Paraguay: Villar - Da Silva, Veron (Santana 74), Morel (Caniza 66), Bonet (Alcaraz 60), Vera (Barreto 80), V Caceres, Riveros (Ortigoza 80), Torres, Santa Cruz, Barrios (E Benitez 66).

June 2 - Oslo
Norway 0
Ukraine 1 (Zozulia 78)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 10,178. **Ref:** Blom (Hol)
Norway: Knudsen - Hogli, Waehler, Hangeland, J A Riise, Huseklepp (Moldskred 75), B H Riise (Skjelbred 66), Hauger (Demidov 79), Grindheim (Brenne 79), Gamst Pedersen, Abdellaoue.
Ukraine: Dykan - Husiev (Oliynyk 84), Rusol, Chygrynskyi, Oshchypko, Tymoshchuk, Rakitskyi, Yakovenko (Kobin 57), Yarmolenko (Devic 55), Konoplyanka (Fedetskyi 90), Zozulia (Rotan 81).

Ton up...Mokoena

SOUTH AFRICA

Mokoena's century

Portsmouth defender Aaron Mokoena became the first man to win 100 caps for South Africa when he appeared in his country's 5-0 friendly victory over Guatemala.

The winning margin was Bafana Bafana's biggest since their return to international football in 1992 after 28 years of apartheid-induced isolation.

TANZANIA

Taifa Stars to get new European coach

Danish coach Jan Borge Poulsen has been appointed Tanzania's new national team coach. The 63-year-old has agreed a two-year contract with effect from August.

Poulsen, who has been national coach of Armenia, will take over from current coach Marcio Maximo. He was also Richard Moller Nielsen's assistant for the Denmark team and he was part of the coaching staff that won Euro 1992.

UKRAINE

Winning start

Dynamo Kyiv's 20-year-old striker Roman Zozulya scored the winning goal on his international debut in the 1-0 victory in Norway.

Debutant...Zozulya

June 2 - Kufstein, Austria
Poland 0
Serbia 0
Att: 7,000. **Ref:** Drabek (Aut)
Poland: Fabianski - Piszczek (Jodlowiec 68), Wojtkowiak, Glik, Sadlok, Dudka, Peszko (Rybus 77), Mierzejewski, Blaszczykowski (Matuszczyk 88), Nowak (Cetnarski 71), R Lewandowski (Sobiech 90).
Serbia: Isailovic (Stojkovic 46) - Ivanovic, Subotic, Lukovic, Kolarov, D Stankovic (Petrovic 46), Kuzmanovic, Jovanovic (Z Tosic 46), Krasic (Mrdja 69), Lazovic (Kacar 59), Zigic (Pantelic 46).

June 2 - Villach, Austria
Romania 0
Macedonia 1 (Sikov 28)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 1,000. **Ref:** Krassnitzer (Aut)
Romania: Pantilimon - Dananae, Tamas (Goian 46), Chivu, Rat, Tanase (Ghioane 53), Radoi, Cocis, Deac (Cristea 68), D Niculae (Bilasco 62), Mazilu (Dica 46).
Macedonia: Nuredinoski (Pacovski 80) - Sikov, I Mitreski, Noveski, Popov, Sumulikoski (Alimi 58), Ibraimi, Georgievski, Despotovski (Grozdanoski 60), Trickovski (Ilijoski 67), Savic (Kurtisi 64).

June 2 - Harare
Zimbabwe 0
Brazil 3 (Michel Bastos 42, Robinho 45, Elano 56)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Ebrahim
Zimbabwe: Sibanda - Mapemba, Makonese (Sweswe 85), Mwanjali, Jambo, Nengomasha, Rambanepasi (Alumenda 67), Antipas (Mushekwi 68), Karuru (Nyoni 54), Mwaruwari (Nkatha 54), Musona.
Brazil: Julio Cesar (Gomes 26) - Maicon (Daniel Alves 46), Lucio (Luisao 46), Thiago Silva, Michel Bastos, Gilberto Silva, Felipe Melo, Elano, Kaka (Julio Baptista 46), Robinho (Nilmar 64), Luis Fabiano (Grafite 60).

Thursday, June 3

June 3 - Frankfurt
Germany 3 (Lahm 50, Schweinsteiger pen 73, 77)
Bosnia-Herzegovina 1 (Dzeko 15)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 48,000. **Ref:** Rizzoli (Ita)
Germany: Neuer - Lahm, Mertesacker, A Friedrich (Tasci 86), Badstuber, Khedira, Schweinsteiger (Kroos 87), Trochowski (Muller 46), Ozil (Gomez 80), Podolski (Marin 70), Klose (Cacau 46).
Bosnia-Herzegovina: Hasagic - Mravac (Ibricic 45), Nadarevic, Spahic, Jahic, Rahimic, Pjanic, Salihovic (Berberovic 78), Ibisevic (Zec 74), Misimovic (Muslimovic 80), Dzeko.

June 3 - Brussels
Italy 1 (Bonucci 89)
Mexico 2 (Vela 17, A Medina 84)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Verbist (Blg)
Italy: Buffon - Zambrotta (Maggio 63), Bonucci, Cannavaro (Bocchetti 88), Criscito, Pirlo (Palombo 82), De Rossi (Quagliarella 76), Iaquinta, Marchisio, Di Natale (Pepe 46), Gilardino (Pazzini 63).
Mexico: O Perez - Aguilar, F Rodriguez (Moreno 69), Osorio, Salcido, Juarez (Guardado 86), Marquez (Barrera 46), Torrado, G Dos Santos (A Medina 52), Hernandez (Blanco 71), Vela (I Castro 83).

June 3 - Innsbruck, Austria
Spain 1 (Jesus Navas 85)
South Korea 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 18,000. **Ref:** Schorgenhofer (Aut)
Spain: Reina (Valdes 46) - Sergio Ramos, Albiol, Marchena, Capdevila, Iniesta (Xavi 58), Fabregas (Xabi Alonso 58), Javi Martinez (Silva 79), Mata (Pedro 58), Jesus Navas, Llorente (Villa 58).
South Korea: Lee Woon-jae (Jung Sung-ryong 46) - Oh Beom-seok (Cha Du-ri 80), Cho Yong-hyung, Lee Jung-soo, Lee Young-pyo, Kim Jung-woo, Ki Sung-yong, Lee Chung-yong, Kim Jae-sung (Kim Nam-il 46), Yeom Ki-hun (Ahn Jung-hwan 65), Park Chu-young.

Friday, June 4

June 4 - Saint-Pierre, Reunion
France 0
China 1 (Deng Zhuoxiang 68)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 10,043. **Ref:** Proenca (Por)
France: Lloris - Sagna (Reveillere 46), Gallas, Abidal, Evra, Malouda (Diaby 62), Gourcuff, Toulalan, Ribery (Gignac 62), Govou (Valbuena 72), Anelka (Henry 62).
China: Zeng Cheng - Du Wei (Li Xuepeng 46), Bai Lei (He Yang 61), Cui Peng (Yang Xu 80), Liu Jian, Yu Hanchao, Qu Bo (Yu Hai 46), Rong Hao, Wang Qiang, Deng Zhuoxiang, Gao Lin (Zhu Ting 52).

June 4 - Sion, Switzerland
Ivory Coast 2 (Tulio Tanaka og 13, K Toure 80)
Japan 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 4,919. **Ref:** Studer (Swi)
Ivory Coast: Barry - Demel, K Toure, Tiene, Zokora, Eboue, Tiote (E Kone 88), Y Toure, Dindane (Gervinho 74), Kalou, Drogba (Doumbia 19; Keita 61).
Japan: Kawashima - Nakazawa, Tulio Tanaka, Konno (Komano 68), Nagatomo, Endo (K Nakamura 46), Abe (Inamoto 46), Hasebe, Honda (S Nakamura 46), Okubo (Morimoto 65), Okazaki (Tamada 55).

June 4 - Hesperange
Luxembourg 0
Faroe Islands 0
Faroe Islands: Gunnar Nielsen - E Hansen, Davidsen, Gregersen, Benjaminsen, S Olsen, Poulsen (Lokin 70), S Samuelsen, Mouritsen (Edmundson 81), Holst (C Jacobsen 80), Naes.

June 4 - Maribor
Slovenia 3 (Novakovic 7, 30, Kirm 44)
New Zealand 1 (Fallon 20)
HT: 3-1. **Ref:** Kakos (Gre)
Slovenia: S Handanovic - Brecko (Ilic 76), Cesar, Suler, Jokic, Koren, Radosavljevic (Krhin 78), Kirm (Matavz 84), Birsa (Komac 79), Ljubijankic (Dedic 12), Novakovic (Pecnik 61).
New Zealand: Paston - Reid, Nelsen, Smith, Lochhead, Christie, Elliott, Bertos, Fallon, Smeltz, Wood (Brockie 46).

June 4 - Omdurman
Sudan 1 (Mokhtar)
Palestine 1 (Jamal)
HT: 1-1

Saturday, June 5

June 5 - Furth, Germany
Algeria 1 (Ziani pen 51)
United Arab Emirates 0
HT: 0-0
Algeria: Chaouchi - Bougherra, Halliche, Yahia, Belhadj, Matmour (Abdoun 87), Mansouri (Kadir 66), Lacen (Guedioura 76), Ziani, Ghezzal (Saifi 63), Djebbour (Boudebouz 63).
UAE: Humaid (Abdirahman 82) - Al Hmadi, Alkamoli, Mubarak, Sabil, Al Shehhi (Al Jenaibi 54), Al Hamadi (Al Ghafiri 77), Al Jenaibi, Awana (Al Khatiry 62), Matar (Bargash 73), Khalil.

June 5 - Milton Keynes, England
Ghana 1 (Owusu-Abeyie 88)
Latvia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 8,108. **Ref:** Clattenburg (Eng)
Ghana: Agyei - Inkoom, Addy, Vorsah, John Mensah (Jonathan Mensah 59), Annan, K-P Boateng (D Boateng 67), Tagoe (Owusu-Abeyie 59), D Ayew (Amoah 82), Asamoah (Appiah 59), Gyan (Adiyiah 46).
Latvia: Vanins (Kolinko 46) - Klava, Astafjevs (Kolesnicenko 80), Zirnis, Laizans (Rafalskis 46), Ivanovs, Mihadjuks, Solonicins, Pereplotkins (Krjauklis 83), Rudnevs (Karasausks 59), Grebis (Zigajevs 72).

June 5 - Amsterdam
Holland 6 (Van Persie 22, Sneijder 56, Robben 64, 78, Van Bommel 71, Elia 75)
Hungary 1 (Dzsudzsak 6)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 45,000. **Ref:** Meyer (Ger)
Holland: Stekelenburg - Van der Wiel, Heitinga (Ooijer 61), Mathijsen, Van Bronckhorst, Sneijder (Elia 73), Van Bommel (De Zeeuw 79), De Jong, Van der Vaart (Afellay 80), Kuyt (Robben 46), Van Persie (Huntelaar 68).
Hungary: Fulop - Bodnar (Laczko 80), Horvath (Vadocz 80), Juhasz, Vanczak, Szelesi, Dzsudzsak, Huszti (Lazok 68), Bodor, Priskin, Torghelle (Elek 58).

June 5 - Sankt Veit an der Glan, Austria
Romania 3 (D Niculae 20, Florescu 45, Radoi pen 76)
Honduras 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 150. **Ref:** Grobelnik (Aut)
Romania: Lobont (Lung 83) - Dananae, Tamas (Galamaz 79), Goian, Rat (Sepsi 84), Cocis (Ghioane 46), Radoi, Florescu, Deac (Radut 82), Bilasco, D Niculae (Dica 67).
Honduras: Escober - Mendoza, Bernardez (O Chavez 39), Izaguirre, Figueroa, R Nunez (Espinoza 46), W Palacios (Turcios 68), Guevara, De Leon (Pavon 59), Suazo, Welcome.

June 5 - Belgrade
Serbia 4 (Krasic 16, D Stankovic 25, Milijas pen 44, Pantelic 45)
Cameroon 3 (Webo 5, 20, Choupo-Moting 67)
HT: 4-2. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Grattou (Cyp)
Serbia: Stojkovic - Ivanovic, Subotic, Lukovic, Obradovic (Kolarov 46), D Stankovic, Milijas (Petrovic 46), Krasic (Mrdja 62), Jovanovic (Z Tosic 68), Zigic (Lazovic 46), Pantelic (Ninkovic 57).
Cameroon: Hamidou - Mandjeck (Geremi 46), Mbia, Bassong, Assou-Ekotto, Nkoulou (Matip 63), Nguemo, Makoun, Aboubakar (Emana 46), Choupo-Moting (Bong 77), Webo (Idrissou 63).

June 5 - Bratislava
Slovakia 3 (Sequeira og 16, Vittek 47, Sestak pen 88)
Costa Rica 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 10,074. **Ref:** Aydinus (Tur)
Slovakia: Mucha - Zabavnik, Skrtel (Salata 16), Durica, Cech (Pekarik 46), Strba (Kopunek 46), Weiss, Hamsik (Sapara 46), Stoch (Jendrisek 77), Sestak, Vittek (Holosko 67).
Costa Rica: Navas - Myrie (Gonzales 80), Sequeira, Segares, Diaz, Guzman, Barrantes (Estrada 69), Urena (Gamboa 52), Hernandez (Mena 80), Madrigal (Paniagua 69), Parks.

June 5 - Atteridgeville
South Africa 1 (Mphela 75)
Denmark 0
HT: 0-0
South Africa: Khune - Gaxa (Ngcongca 63), Thwala, Khumalo, Mokoena, Dikgacoi (Khuboni 63), Letsholonyane, Modise (Parker 77), Pienaar (Moriri 63), Tshabalala, Mphela (Sibaya 81).
Denmark: Andersen - S Poulsen (Mtiliga 35), Jacobsen, Kroldrup, Agger (Kvist 70), C Poulsen (Larsen 72), Martin Jorgensen, J Poulsen (Jensen 46), Rommedahl, Gronkjaer (Enevoldsen 57), Tomasson (Beckmann 57).

June 5 - Geneva
Switzerland 1 (Inler 10)
Italy 1 (Quagliarella 14)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Piccirillo (Fra)
Switzerland: Benaglio (Wolfli 46) - Lichtsteiner, Senderos, Grichting, Ziegler (Magnin 81), Behrami (Barnetta 58), Inler, Huggel, Fernandes (Shaqiri 88), Frei (Yakin 75), Nkufo (Derdiyok 68).
Italy: Marchetti - Maggio, Bocchetti, Chiellini, Zambrotta (Criscito 81), Gattuso (Iaquinta 86), Palombo (De Rossi 88), Cossu (Pepe 46), Montolivo, Quagliarella (Di Natale 66), Pazzini (Gilardino 77).

June 5 - Roodepoort, South Africa
United States 3 (Buddle 4, 31, Gomez 90+3)
Australia 1 (Cahill 19)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 2,000. **Ref:** Ebrahim (SAf)
United States: Howard (Hahnemann 46) - Cherundolo, DeMerit, Goodson (Onyewu 61), Bocanegra (Bornstein 55), Donovan, Clark, Bradley, Dempsey (Gomez 82), Findley, Buddle (Beasley 78).
Australia: Schwarzer - Wilkshire, Neill, Moore, Chipperfield, Garcia, Grella, Cahill (Valeri 46), Culina (Vidosic 61), Bresciano, Kennedy (Rukavytsya 71).

Sunday, June 6

June 6 - Johannesburg, South Africa
Nigeria 3 (Yakubu 17, Obinna pen 62, Martins 88)
North Korea 1 (Jong Tae-se 63)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 20,000
Nigeria: Enyeama - Shittu (Afolabi 58), Yobo, Odiah, Taiwo (Echiejile 46), Etuhu (Yussuf 46), Kaita (K Uche 46), Lukman, Yakubu (Kanu 67), Odemwingie (Martins 84), Obinna.
North Korea: Ri Myong-guk - Ri Jun-il, Ri Kwang-chon, Nam Song-chol (Ji Yun-nam 46), Cha Jong-hyok, Pak Chol-jin (Pak Nam-chol 20), Mun In-guk, Ri Chol-myong, An Chol-hyok (Hong Yong-jo 46), Jong Tae-se, Choe Kum-chol.
Sent off: Cha Jong-hyok 77min.

Monday, June 7

June 7 - Dar es Salaam
Tanzania 1 (Aziz 86)
Brazil 5 (Robinho 9, 33, Ramires 52, 90+1, Kaka 75)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Ssegonga (Uga)
Tanzania: Mwarami - Shadrack (Kanoni 72), Harubi, Kelvin, Mwasika, Erasto (Bakari 36), Abdoulharin (Aziz 77), Nizzar, Ngassa, Migosi (Bocco 58), Kig.
Brazil: Gomes - Maicon, Lucio (Luisao 46), Juan, Michel Bastos (Gilberto 46), Gilberto Silva (Josue 46), Felipe Melo (Ramires 46), Elano (Daniel Alves 59), Kaka, Robinho, Luis Fabiano (Nilmar 76).

PEOPLE in the news

Following in Blanc's footsteps

New Bordeaux boss...Tigana (right) with club president Jean-Louis Triaud

EUROPE

JEAN TIGANA is the new coach of Bordeaux, replacing LAURENT BLANC, who will take over as France coach after the World Cup.

DICK ADVOCAAT will succeed GUUS HIDDINK as Russia's national coach. Advocaat resigned as boss of Belgium in April and has been replaced in that post by GEORGES LEEKENS.

Moved...Advocaat

Spain Under-16 coach AITOR KARANKA, the former Real Madrid defender, has returned to the Bernabeu as assistant to JOSE MOURINHO.

West Ham United, who narrowly avoided relegation from the Premier League, sacked manager GIANFRANCO ZOLA and replaced him with AVRAM GRANT – who was relegated, with Portsmouth.

MUSTAFA DENIZLI stepped down as coach of Besiktas for health reasons, saying he must rest "without big challenges, stress and major excitement".

KRUNOSLAV JURCIC resigned as Dinamo Zagreb coach a week after winning the Croatian championship. He has been replaced by VELIMIR ZAJEC, a former player and sporting director at Dinamo who returns for a second spell as head coach.

Former Livorno, Juventus, Genoa and Internazionale winger GIACOMO NERI, who played three times for Italy and was the oldest living man to have been capped by his country, has died at the age of 94.

Former Germany striker OLIVER NEUVILLE announced his retirement and will now work as a youth-team coach with Borussia Monchengladbach. The 37-year-old, who made 69 appearances for his country, played in two World Cups and was a runner-up in the 2002 Champions League Final with Bayer Leverkusen.

Former Austria Under-21 striker BESIAN IDRIZAJ died aged 22 after suffering a suspected heart attack. The one-time Liverpool youngster spent the 2009-10 season with Welsh club Swansea City in the English second tier.

Tragedy...Idrizaj

Dinamo Zagreb's former Croatia defender ROBERT KOVAC announced his retirement. The 37-year-old, who won 80 caps, spent most of his career in Germany playing for Hertha Berlin, Nurnberg, Bayer Leverkusen, Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund, plus a spell with Juventus in Italy.

Former Stuttgart coach MARKUS BABBEL has replaced FRIEDHELM FUNKEL in charge of relegated Bundesliga side Hertha Berlin.

Referee TOM HENNING OVREBO, who was criticised following Chelsea's Champions League semi-final defeat at home to Barcelona in 2009, has retired from international duty after missing out on selection for the World Cup. He will continue to referee games in the Norwegian league.

AFRICA

HERVE RENARD has taken charge of Angola's national team after leaving his post with Zambia.

JOSE PAULO RUBIM is the new coach of Benin. The Brazilian, who has previously led Liberia's national team, replaces MICHAEL DUSSUYER.

French coach BERTRAND MARCHAND has left Qatari club Al Khor to take charge of Tunisia.

HUBERT VELUD, the Togo coach who was wounded in the attack on his team's bus prior to the African Nations Cup in Angola, resigned to take charge of French third division side Creteil.

Former Zimbabwe midfielder NORMAN MAPENZA is the new national coach. He replaces SUNDAY CHIDZAMBWA, who left to take over as boss of South Africa's Free State Stars.

ASIA

FABIO CANNAVARO, who was Italy's World Cup-winning captain in 2006, will join UAE club Al Ahli following his release by Juventus. The 36-year-old defender, who leads his country again this summer, will retire from international football after the finals in South Africa.

Glory boy...Fowler

Former Liverpool and England striker ROBBIE FOWLER has joined Perth Glory after being released from his contract by A-League rivals North Queensland Fury.

AURELIO VIDMAR quit as boss of A-League side Adelaide United to become assistant coach for the national team. He will also be in charge of Australia's 2012 Olympic side.

ULI STIELIKE, who was a runner-up as a defender with Germany in the 1982 World Cup, has signed a one-year contract to coach Al Sailiya in Qatar.

BELGIUM Anderlecht win 30th title

Unstoppable...Anderlecht's Lucas Biglia (centre) celebrates his side scoring away to Club Brugge

THE jury is out for another 12 months on whether the new league format, designed to add extra excitement to the domestic season, was a success or not.

The ease with which Anderlecht won a record 30th championship left the inaugural end-of-season play-offs lacking the suspense for which they had been designed. But it was not as if the revised denouement was entirely to blame. For that you had to thank Ariel Jacobs and his players.

The 15 top-flight sides – following the demise of Mouscron – played each other home and away before the league split into three groups, with the top six battling for the title, the teams placed seven to 14 vying for a Europa League slot, and 15th-place Roeselaere waging what was to be an unsuccessful battle against relegation.

If the end of the season lacked suspense, the play-offs weren't to blame – for that you had to thank Ariel Jacobs and his players

Anderlecht finished the regular season 12 points clear of Club Brugge and, with every side's points total halved, went into the play-offs with a six-point lead. It was still to prove more than enough, whatever the claims beforehand from Brugge players that they would make a fight of it.

"We are going for the title," insisted defender Carl Hoefkens. "That seems a realistic goal, although we know that closing the gap in a small number of matches won't be easy."

As it happened, Anderlecht were able to gain extra satisfaction from their latest triumph by the fact that it was completed in the Jan Breydel Stadium, the home of their greatest rivals, only six games into the 10-game play-off schedule. Jacobs reflected that his team had achieved "something to be proud of" following their 2-1 victory over Brugge. Jelle Van Damme and Matias Suarez put the visitors ahead, with Wesley Sonck scoring a late consolation goal in injury time.

Jacobs, who was thrown skywards by his team amid the post-match celebrations, said modestly: "I should be the one to take the players on my shoulders but that is not really possible. The actors are on the stage while the director stays behind the scenes. I would not have imagined we would win here although we have managed to maintain a high level in recent weeks."

One bonus for Anderlecht was the emergence of the remarkable Romelu Lukaku, who had become the youngest top scorer in Belgium since the end of the Second World War by the time he celebrated his 17th birthday in May.

The other was the return of Marcin Wasilewski in the final play-off game from an injury he said had left his leg looking as if "it had been bitten by a shark" following a spiteful challenge from Standard's Axel Witsel last August. The Polish defender was given a standing ovation when he came on after 82 minutes against St Truiden having recovered from a double fracture. Fears he might not play again were dispelled by Wasilewski who said: "I have been given a second footballing life and I want to make the most of it."

Having endured five operations, he was full of praise for the Anderlecht fans. Witsel's malicious lunge had come in the 27th minute and Wasilewski said: "In the 27th minute of every match after that, home and away, they would stop their singing to chant my name for one minute. I had fantastic support from them."

While his team-mates now look forward to taking a summer break, Wasilewski is resigned to being back in the gym. "I will have no more than 10 days off," he said.

Amid all the hard work geared to his recovery, Wasilewski must have permitted himself the odd wry smile at the decline of Witsel and Standard, who finished the regular season 30 points off the pace and failed to gain a place in next season's Europa League. Not so, the club's former coach Michel Preud'homme, whose Gent side – eventual runners-up in the league – beat Cercle Brugge 3-0 in the Cup Final with goals from Elimane Coulibaly, Mbaye Leye and Christophe Grondin.

With Gent earning a place in the third qualifying round of the Champions League – where they will be without Preud'homme who has left to lead Dutch championsTwente – Cercle Brugge will enter the Europa League second qualifying round under new coach Bob Peeters, to the obvious chagrin of city rivals Club Brugge, who take the Europa League play-off ticket originally intended for the Cup winners.

Under the former national team and Anderlecht coach Aime Anthuenis, Lierse returned to the top flight after a three-year absence by winning the second division. Joining them in the first division for the first time will be Eupen, a side from the German-speaking part of Belgium who emerged from the play-offs.

Nicholas Harling

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
MBARK BOUSSOUFA
(Anderlecht)
This Holland-born Morocco international is the best-paid player in the league and his displays in midfield were an inspiration.

COACH OF THE SEASON
ARIEL JACOBS
(Anderlecht)
In addition to guiding his team to an overwhelming title triumph, he also gave them respectability in the Europa League after the embarrassment of their 8-2 aggregate exit in the Champions League at the hands of Lyon.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
ROMELU LUKAKU
(Anderlecht)
The teenager attracted the attention of Europe's top clubs for his goalscoring prowess, which was all the more remarkable for one so young.

Prospect...teen sensation Lukaku

FIRST DIVISION – REGULAR SEASON – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Anderlecht	28	22	3	3	62	20	69
Club Brugge	28	17	6	5	52	33	57
Gent	28	14	7	7	49	30	49
Kortrijk	28	12	9	7	39	30	45
St Truiden	28	12	6	10	35	35	42
Zulte Waregem	28	10	11	7	39	32	41
Mechelen	28	12	3	13	36	46	39
Standard	28	10	9	9	38	34	39
Cercle Brugge	28	11	5	12	45	40	38
Germinal B	28	9	8	11	30	43	35
Genk	28	8	10	10	33	31	34
Westerlo	28	8	8	12	28	34	32
Charleroi	28	5	8	15	28	45	23
Lokeren	28	5	3	20	22	54	18
Roeselare	28	4	6	18	29	58	18
Mouscron	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

(For play-offs table see World Service, page xx)

DENMARK Copenhagen in the clear

Wonderful...Copenhagen do it again

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
PETER UTAKA (OB)
His powerful play up front for the club from Odense was a delight to watch – as well as being hugely productive for his club.

COACH OF THE SEASON
HENRIK JENSEN (Brondby)
Proved that a good boss is just that – whether it's in the men's or the women's game.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
LEON JESSEN (Midtjylland)
An excellent season in defence with his club side won him a national team call-up.

National recognition...Jessen

MONEY talks in the Danish Superliga – as it often does in football – and the country's richest club, Copenhagen, ran out easy champions and claimed a place in next season's Champions League third qualifying round. While they secured the title with two games to spare, the outcome was obvious for some time earlier.

It was the club's sixth Superliga title in eight seasons, with only Brondby and AaB breaking their stranglehold, and while there is no doubt that they have been significantly the best, it must be a concern that Copenhagen have become so dominant. Although they will lose long-serving midfielder Atiba Hutchinson to PSV Eindhoven this summer, few expect that to diminish their superiority.

Senegalese striker Dame N'Doye found the net 14 times for the champions and – along with the season's top scorer, Nigerian centre-forward Peter Utaka, who hit 18 for runners-up OB – he emphasised the growing influence of African players in the Superliga, which continues to lose its best Danish youngsters to the bigger European leagues – with Christian Eriksen at Ajax being the latest glaring example.

Rumours had suggested that two developing players with a famous surname might also join the exodus but, so far, the sons of Michael Laudrup remain at home.

Younger brother Andreas Laudrup, who was linked with Real Madrid at one stage, had his first taste of glory when helping Nordsjaelland lift the Danish Cup with a 2-0 victory against Midtjylland to qualify for next season's Europa League. Although only a substitute, Laudrup came on in the 66th minute and played his part as two extra-time goals from Nicolai Stokholm and Bajram Fetai claimed the trophy.

Elder brother Mads Laudrup suffered a less satisfying season with HB Koge, the new fusion club born from a merger between Herfolge and Koge who were relegated after a campaign that never fully recovered from a shocking start. Nevertheless, this Laudrup had the welcome boost of selection for the Denmark Under-21 squad that went to the annual Toulon summer tournament in France.

The other relegated side were AGF, which prompted protests by fans of what is traditionally one of Denmark's senior clubs. The team from Aarhus had a disastrous second half of the season after the winter break, and even the return of veteran Denmark international Martin Jorgensen was unable to inspire them. AGF were hurt by losing dynamic midfielder Jakob Poulsen to injury for many games and relegation was confirmed on the final afternoon as they lost 3-0 at home to OB. The agony was intensified because victory would have saved them as rivals Randers – who qualified for the Europa League next term through the fair-play system – also lost.

HB Koge and AGF will be replaced by Horsens and Frederica next term.

There were several intriguing side plots to the season. OB's fine second-placed finish, which earns them entry to the Europa League, owed much not only to the thrusting forward play of Utaka but also to the security given by two veterans at the back. Thomas Helveg, so long a star at Milan, enjoyed an Indian summer, as did goalkeeper Roy Carroll, the former Manchester United player who revived his career with some splendid form.

But the most dramatic story was at Brondby, who had been expected to challenge for the title under the leadership of highly rated former Denmark defender Kent Nielsen. Instead, a severe dip in results immediately after the winter break saw Nielsen sacked as the club dropped towards the relegation zone.

He was replaced by Henrik Jensen, who for two years – between 2005 and 2007 – had been the coach of Brondby women's side. Jensen's impact upon the men's team was instant, and 23 points from the final 11 matches sent Brondby roaring up to finish in third place and earn entry to next season's Europa League.

It was an improbable plot line, but then Denmark is the home of Hans Christian Andersen and fairy tales.

Jim Holden

While there is no doubt they have become significantly the best, there must be concern that Copenhagen have become so dominant

SUPERLIGA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Copenhagen	33	21	5	7	61	22	68
OB	33	17	8	8	46	34	59
Brondby	33	15	7	11	57	50	52
Esbjerg	33	13	11	9	48	43	50
AaB	33	13	9	11	36	30	48
Midtjylland	33	14	5	14	45	48	47
Nordsjaelland	33	12	7	14	40	41	43
Silkeborg	33	12	7	14	47	51	43
SonderjyskE	33	11	8	14	32	37	41
Randers	33	10	10	13	37	43	40
AGF	33	10	8	15	36	47	38
HB Koge	33	4	7	22	30	69	19

GREECE Olympiakos dominance ends

Derby clash...Panathinaikos' Leto (left) battles with Jaouad Zairi of Olympiakos

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
DJIBRIL CISSE
(Panathinaikos)
The league's top scorer with 23 goals, he was voted the MVP and was a major ingredient in his side winning the double.

COACH OF THE SEASON
NIKOS NIOPLIAS
(Panathinaikos)
Came to the club in December following a very successful assignment as coach of Greece Under-21s and brought confidence and calmness to the team.

Hot shot...Cisse

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
LINO (PAOK)
The 32-year-old Brazilian defender has been hugely impressive since arriving from Porto.

THE last time Panathinaikos won the Greek Super League, the national side went on to triumph on the international stage that summer. While a repeat of Euro 2004's success in South Africa may well be beyond Otto Rehhegal's charges, Greens' fans will still enjoy June and July, safe in the knowledge that their great rivals, Olympiakos, have just suffered only their second trophyless season in 13 years.

Panathinaikos clinched their 20th championship with a week to spare, giving new boss Nikos Nioplias his first coaching success and making a hero of bearded, cigar-smoking club president Nikos Pateras, who brought in Greece Under-21 boss Nioplias to replace Henk Ten Cate during the season.

"We dedicate winning this title to the fans as it would have not been possible without their support," said shipping tycoon Pateras, who was also credited with signing France striker Djibril Cisse, Argentinian winger Sebastian Leto and Greece midfielder Kostas Katsouranis last summer.

And Nioplias' side made it an even greater season to remember, adding the Greek Cup with a 1-0 win over Aris for an eighth double.

"It was a great victory for us," said Nioplias after the Final. "Our opponent wanted the trophy very much but ran into the best team in Greece this year."

Olympiakos, who employed three different coaches last term, will be looking for another when they enter next season's Europa League after a dismal campaign. The disappointment was reflected in the thousands of empty seats at Karaiskaki Stadium for the 0-0 draw against Aris in the play-offs which drew an all-time low attendance of 7,088. PAOK finished top of the play-off group and, for only the second time in their history, will enter the Champions League, along with Panathinaikos.

"We worked so hard all season and we have got our reward," claimed PAOK's Spanish midfielder Vitolo. "We have a great group of players and I believe we are close to writing a new page in the history of the club."

PAOK's success story was mainly due to Portuguese coach Fernando Santos' strategies, but he has announced he will step down after three years at the helm – which is one of the longest reigns of any coach in the Super League – and will probably be replaced by fellow countryman Jorge Costa. Some good news for the club, however, would be the return of national team striker Dimitris Salpigidis who has said he wants to leave Panathinaikos and rejoin his old team.

One thing that did not change last season was violence at grounds throughout the country, with several games being delayed due to trouble in the stands or outside stadiums.

Michalis Chrysohoidis, the government's citizen protection minister, has gone so far as to warn clubs that they either crack down on violence or face being barred from European competition. He also said stiff penalties will be imposed on teams that foster hooliganism and stadiums that do not meet safety and security requirements.

The general secretary for sports, Panayiotis Bitaxis, also warned that funding through the state-owned gambling company would be suspended for clubs if the violence continues, stating: "Greek citizens are feeling enraged and frustrated at having to watch championships that lack credibility and where the law of the jungle and blind violence rules."

But the Super League says it cannot solve the problem on its own, claiming: "Instead of further co-operation, the state is looking to economically blackmail us with the proposal to suspend the co-operation between the Super League and the state gambling company."

Like violence, match-fixing is also a problem, with Greek MP Thanos Plevris presenting a list of 27 games which are currently under investigation – including two from the Super League and three from the Greek Cup – though he has not disclosed how or from whom he received the list.

Lou Economopoulos

> "We dedicate winning this title to the fans as it would not have been possible without their support" *Panathinaikos president Nikos Pateras*

SUPER LEAGUE - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Panathinaikos	30	22	4	4	54	17	70
Olympiakos	30	19	7	4	47	18	64
PAOK	30	19	5	6	41	16	62
AEK	30	15	8	7	43	31	53
Aris	30	12	10	8	35	28	46
Kavala	30	10	9	11	31	32	39
Atromitos	30	10	8	12	34	36	38
Larisa	30	10	7	13	31	42	37
Panionios	30	9	10	11	34	35	37
Iraklis	30	10	7	13	39	41	37
Ergotelis	30	9	9	12	37	41	36
Asteras	30	10	6	14	29	36	36
Xanthi	30	10	5	15	27	36	35
Levadiakos	30	9	7	14	31	44	34
Giannina	30	7	7	16	27	46	28
Panthrakikos	30	3	3	24	21	62	12

HOLLAND Twente hold off Ajax

History makers...Twente win their first-ever Eredivisie title

AJAX may have had the league's most prolific attack, its best defence, the competition's top scorer and an impressive run of 14 consecutive matches without dropping a single point, but it still wasn't enough to land their first championship since 2004.

"It's bizarre," admitted Ajax coach Martin Jol. "Finishing with 85 points, in any other country it would be rewarded with the title."

But three defeats before the winter break proved to be fatal as last year's runners-up Twente won the first title in their 45-year history.

Former Tottenham Hotspur boss Jol needed all his expertise to restart the Ajax machine this term after a chaotic year under Marco Van Basten. By the halfway stage, they were nine points behind PSV and Twente, but from that moment on the capital club won all their games and put the pressure on Twente right up until the end of the season.

However, much to the annoyance of the Amsterdammers, their rivals didn't break down and Twente did what they had to do, winning four of their last five games to take the championship by a point. Their boss Steve McClaren also became the first foreigner to be voted coach of the year before announcing he will take charge of German club Wolfsburg next season.

Ajax did have the consolation of winning the Dutch Cup, though fears of hooliganism cast a shadow over the event.

They had been due to meet rivals Feyenoord in the Final in a single-match showdown in De Kuip stadium in Rotterdam but, since both clubs had agreed not to welcome visiting fans in the league because of past troubles, Ajax faced the prospect of playing the Final without their own supporters.

Ahmed Aboutaleb, the mayor of Rotterdam, announced an exception for the Final. But after internet threats by hooligans from both clubs looked set to push security costs up to £1million, the Dutch FA decided to make it a two-game tie with no visiting fans.

Simon De Jong scored four times and Luis Suarez twice as Feyenoord were beaten 2-0 in Amsterdam and 4-1 at home in a Final that bid farewell to the Rotterdam club's former European Golden Boot winner Roy Makaay and international skipper Giovanni Van Bronckhorst, who both announced they were hanging up their boots.

While Twente and Ajax go into the Champions League, Feyenoord will be joined in the Europa League by PSV, who had a miserable season. The low point for the Eindhoven club came when Brazilian striker Jonathan Reis was sacked in January and sent to a rehabilitation centre for using cocaine.

Caretaker boss Dick Advocaat rescued AZ's season by finishing fifth after the sacking of Ronald Koeman and the collapse of chairman Dirk Scheringa's DSB business and they also go into the Europa League, along with Utrecht, who booked their place by beating Roda JC in the play-offs.

At the other end of the table, bottom club RKC swapped places with second division champions De Graafschap, while Holland's oldest professional club, Sparta Rotterdam, were also relegated, going down for the second time in their history – both times under the guidance of a European trophy-winning coach: Frank Rijkaard in 2002 and now former Ajax and Anderlecht boss Aad De Mos.

With confidence at an all-time low, Sparta faced crosstown rivals Excelsior in a play-off thriller.

After a goalless draw at home, Excelsior had a golden opportunity in the return game but Guyon Fernandez missed a penalty in the 88th minute with the score at 0-0. Rydell Poepon then headed home what looked like a winner for Sparta in injury time, before Fernandez volleyed the equaliser 30 seconds later to hand Feyenoord's satellite club an unexpected promotion on away goals. The following day Sparta's board and De Mos resigned.

Willem II managed to survive the play-offs but could still disappear from the top flight. The Tilburg club is heavily in debt and needs to find £1.5m or they will file for bankruptcy. That would mean either RKC or Sparta return to the top flight, or the Eredivisie starts next season with 17 teams.

Klaas-Jan Droppert

> "It's bizarre. Finishing with 85 points, in any other country it would be rewarded with the title" *Ajax coach Martin Jol*

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
LUIS SUAREZ (Ajax)
The league's top scorer with 35 goals, he transformed himself from an egocentric striker into a real team player.

COACH OF THE SEASON
STEVE McCLAREN (Twente)
The former England manager lead Twente to a first national title by bringing in the necessary professionalism and coping with the pressure when it really mattered.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
BRYAN RUIZ (Twente)
The Costa Rica winger was known for his technique and dribbling at Gent but not his goalscoring. However, in his debut season in Holland he scored 24 goals in his side's championship run.

Triumph...McClaren

EREDIVISIE – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Twente	34	27	5	2	63	23	86
Ajax	34	27	4	3	106	20	85
PSV	34	23	9	2	72	29	78
Feyenoord	34	17	12	5	54	31	63
AZ	34	19	5	10	64	34	62
Heracles	34	17	5	12	54	49	56
Utrecht	34	14	11	9	39	33	53
Groningen	34	14	7	13	48	47	49
Roda JC	34	14	5	15	56	60	47
NAC	34	12	10	12	42	49	46
Heerenveen	34	11	4	19	44	64	37
VVV	34	8	11	15	43	57	35
NEC	34	8	9	17	35	59	33
Vitesse	34	8	8	18	38	62	32
Den Haag	34	7	9	18	38	59	30
Sparta	34	6	8	20	30	66	26
Willem II	34	7	2	25	36	70	23
RKC	34	5	0	29	30	80	15

PORTUGAL Benfica end title wait

Plenty of room on top...Benfica's players and fans celebrate an overdue league title

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
ANGEL DI MARIA (Benfica)
The skilful young winger with electrifying speed finished the season with more assists than any other player.

COACH OF THE SEASON
JORGE JESUS (Benfica)
Transformed the Eagles into a high-scoring, mean machine in his first year at the club.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
RADAMEL FALCAO (Porto)
The Colombian striker exceeded expectations in his first season in Europe, scoring 25 league goals.

Impressive debut...Falcao

MORE than 250,000 people poured onto Lisbon's streets at the beginning of May to celebrate Benfica's first league title since 2005 — the Eagles' 32nd championship victory, but only their second in the last 16 years.

Portugal's most successful club sealed the title on the final day with a 2-1 victory over Rio Ave at the Estadio da Luz. A draw would have sufficed, but Benfica delighted a sell-out crowd with their 24th win in 30 league games. Paraguay striker Oscar Cardozo struck twice. His second, 11 minutes from time, was his 26th of the season, and saw him pip Radamel Falcao in the battle to be the league's top scorer.

The headlines in the nation's three daily sports newspapers lavished praise on the players and coach Jorge Jesus, who was credited with building the "best Benfica of the last two decades". The coach, in his first season at the club, transformed an underachieving unit into one of Europe's top scoring sides. They finished the season with 78 goals – an average of 2.6 per game – also won the League Cup and reached the Europa League quarter-finals.

How did he do it? The good old-fashioned way, with a lot of hard work and discipline. Given his first chance to manage one of Portugal's top three clubs, Jesus drew on his vast experience of managing smaller sides and swiftly moved to control the players' egos.

From the first game of the season, it was evident that stars such as Angel Di Maria, Pablo Aimar and Cardozo ran harder and faster than ever before. The coach's "team first" mentality paid immediate dividends as the side won seven of their first eight games, starting a fantastic run that would eventually lead to glory.

> "From the first game of the season, it was evident that stars such as Di Maria, Aimar and Cardozo ran harder than ever before"

Benfica's tremendous title charge led many people to overlook one of the best stories in recent years. Second-placed Sporting Braga, who were top of the table for several weeks, secured their best-ever finish. Traditionally accustomed to playing second fiddle to Benfica, Porto and Sporting Lisbon, the northern side beat them all this season and came close to taking the crown. Led by a young, dynamic manager in Domingos Paciencia, they made a great start to the campaign, winning their first seven league games and held on to second place thanks to a tenacious defence which only conceded 20 goals in 30 matches. Braga can now dream of an historic qualification for the group phase of the Champions League.

Porto, on the other hand, will miss out on Europe's top club competition for the first time since 2003. The Dragons, who had won the last four league titles, had the consolation of winning the Portuguese Cup thanks to a 2-1 victory over second division side Chaves in the Final. The poor league campaign resulted in veteran coach Jesualdo Ferreira leaving the club after four successful years.

Still boasting a strong line-up, Porto were a victim of their own success as many players lacked motivation. This was apparent even in Europe as Porto were humiliated by Arsenal in the Champions League, losing 5-0 at the Emirates Stadium. At the end of the season, their two longest serving players, Bruno Alves and Raul Meireles, hinted that they may leave the club. Both are tipped to move to Spain or England. Falcao's 25 goals in his debut season in Portugal kept Porto's title dream alive until April, but a 1-0 defeat to Benfica in Lisbon scuppered their hopes of silverware.

As disappointing as Porto's league campaign was, it cannot be compared with the suffering Sporting Lisbon fans had to endure as they saw their side finish with one of the lowest points totals in recent history. The Lions ended the season 28 points behind Benfica as both of their coaches failed to inspire them. Paulo Bento left the club in November 2009 after nearly four years at Alvalade Stadium, however the change did not yield better results. Sporting continued to underachieve with Carlos Carvalhal, and struggled to finish fourth, eventually securing a place in the Europa League.

Sporting's troubles can be easily explained. Top striker Liedson, usually so prolific, struggled to find the back of the net and scored only 13 goals. Midfield dynamo Joao Moutinho also played poorly and his uninspired performances cost him a place in Portugal's World Cup squad.

Joining Benfica, Braga, Porto and Sporting Lisbon in Europe next season will be Maritimo, who secured fifth place on the final day of the season. At the bottom of the table, Belenenses were relegated along with Leixoes.

Pedro Pinto

LIGA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Benfica	30	24	4	2	78	20	76
Sporting Braga	30	22	5	3	48	20	71
Porto	30	21	5	4	70	26	68
Sporting Lisbon	30	13	9	8	42	26	48
Maritimo	30	11	8	11	42	43	41
Guimaraes	30	11	8	11	31	34	41
Nacional	30	10	9	11	36	46	39
Naval	30	10	6	14	20	35	36
Uniao Leiria	30	9	8	13	35	41	35
Pacos Ferreira	30	8	11	11	32	37	35
Academica	30	8	9	13	37	42	33
Rio Ave	30	6	13	11	22	33	31
Olhanense	30	5	14	11	31	46	29
Setubal	30	5	10	15	29	57	25
Belenenses	30	4	11	15	23	44	23
Leixoes	30	5	6	19	25	51	21

ROMANIA Double delight for CFR

Spot on...CFR players hail their Cup Final victory over Vaslui

CFR did the domestic double to make it six trophies in three years for the club from Cluj. Although third-place Vaslui managed to take four points from the eventual champions during the league campaign they were unable to stop Andrea Mandorlini's team from lifting a third successive Romanian Cup, CFR winning 5-4 on penalties when the Final ended goalless after extra time.

Although they regained the league crown they lost to Urziceni last year, not everyone was happy with CFR's second title success in three years and, just as in their first triumph, they had to endure a whispering campaign from some of their rivals – all of which cut no ice with CFR and captain Cadu, who said: "We are playing and showing character while they are chattering."

Not everyone was happy with CFR's latest triumph and they had to endure a whispering campaign from some of their rivals

CFR president Iuliu Muresan, meanwhile, added: "It was difficult to lead the race, but we managed because we had the best organised team and the best players."

Urziceni president Mihai Stoica was one of the few opponents gracious enough to accept their success, admitting: "CFR Cluj's title was the finest, as was the first, and the Champions League's hymn for them is totally deserved."

Looking ahead to that European campaign next season, defender Cristian Panin said: "These are magnificent moments and I hope we will create such moments in the Champions League as well. We can achieve big things in the tournament. We have the right to dream because we are champions."

Such optimism has been supported by CFR owner Arpad Paszkany who has announced a record investment of £20million in the club.

CFR will be joined in Europe's premier competition by Urziceni, whose Israeli coach Ronny Levy – with no new signings and the loss of key players Dacian Varga and Tiberiu Balan to contend with – needed too long to settle in to mount a serious challenge.

Steaua – the country's most successful club and European Cup winners in 1986 – finished without a trophy for the fourth successive season and tensions between supporters and owner Gigi Becali continue to worsen. Banners calling for Becali to resign became more noticeable as the season drew to a close and there were even bomb threats made.

The controversial Becali provoked outrage when he banned Freddie Mercury songs from being played at his club's home stadium in Bucharest because of the late singer's sexual orientation and he also sacked fitness coach Yuksel Yesilova for his Muslim beliefs. However, perhaps the biggest embarrassment for Steaua fans was the humiliating 5-1 defeat at the hands of arch-rivals Rapid in April.

At least Steaua and Dinamo have the consolation of Europa League football next season, unlike Rapid.

Meanwhile, there were two more arrests in ongoing match-fixing investigations. Referees Ionica Serea and Marian Martis were accused of accepting bribes to help Arges Pitesti to get a favourable result against Steaua Bucharest last year.

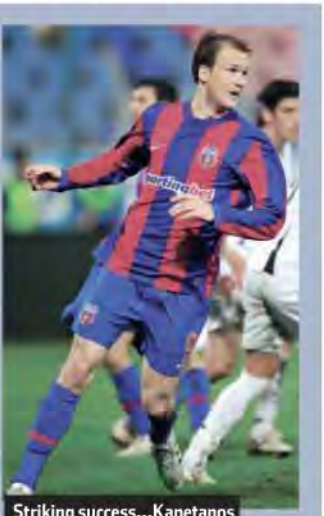
Radu Timofte

Courting controversy...Becali

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
PANTELIS KAPETANOS (Steaua)
Greece striker who finished second in the league scoring list with 15 goals.

COACH OF THE SEASON
ANDREA MANDORLINI (CFR)
The Italian turned the champions into a well-organised side with a strong defence and who were quick to counter-attack.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
WESLEY LOPES (Vaslui)
The Brazilian striker arrived from Leixoes in Portugal and became his side's charismatic playmaker.


Striking success...Kapetanos

LIGA I – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CFR	34	20	9	5	46	23	69
Urziceni	34	18	12	4	53	26	66
Vaslui	34	18	8	8	44	28	62
Steaua	34	18	8	8	49	36	62
Timisoara	34	15	14	5	55	27	59
Dinamo	34	13	14	7	48	37	53
Rapid	34	14	10	10	53	38	52
Otelul	34	14	8	12	38	38	50
Brasov	34	12	10	12	40	30	46
Gaz Metan	34	9	15	10	33	37	42
Gloria	34	10	11	13	35	46	41
International	34	10	6	18	32	49	36
Universitatea	34	11	3	20	44	52	36
Astra	34	8	12	14	33	45	36
Pandurii	34	7	13	14	19	30	34
Politehnica	34	7	10	17	28	50	31
Ceahlaul	34	6	10	18	28	57	28
Alba Iulia	34	7	5	22	33	62	26

SCOTLAND Rangers win lame contest

Something to shout about...Rangers captain David Weir (centre) and his team-mates celebrate their latest SPL title

THIS will not go down as a vintage season for Scottish football. Another dismal campaign in Europe started with Falkirk exiting the Europa League qualifiers to Vaduz of Liechtenstein.

Meanwhile, the manageable pain of Celtic's early exit in the Champions League qualifiers to Arsenal was exacerbated by a dismal Europa League showing, and Rangers finished bottom of their Champions League group, going down at home to Sevilla, Stuttgart and Unirea Urziceni.

Despite the looming shadow of debt and uncertainty over the club's ownership, meaning they could not strengthen significantly, Rangers were able to retain the SPL title without ever having to excel. Old Firm rivals Celtic spent much of the season in turmoil, while inconsistency among the chasing pack meant a terrific chance to break the Glasgow duopoly went begging.

Former Celtic favourite Tony Mowbray swept into Parkhead with a promise to restore success and add style. His first move was to oust many of the old guard, including centre-backs Gary Caldwell – the 2008-09 SPL player of the year – to Wigan Athletic, and captain Stephen McManus, who joined former Celtic boss Gordon Strachan at Middlesbrough.

It was a bold move, but one which backfired; Mowbray's new-look team failed to gel quickly enough and injuries to his defence added to the problems. Equally, none of the strikers brought in compensated for the sale of Scott McDonald, also to Middlesbrough. Robbie Keane's arrival on loan from Tottenham Hotspur in January yielded goals, but proved too little too late.

Mowbray's death knell sounded in March with an embarrassingly spineless 4-0 defeat to St Mirren. Neil Lennon was promoted to interim manager to salvage pride, which he did in the league, only to suffer humiliation in the semi-finals of the Scottish Cup against Ross County.

Aberdeen, under returning prodigal Mark McGhee, and Hearts, under an increasingly frustrated Csaba Laszlo, both endured poor league campaigns, undoing signs of progress in recent times. Hibernian started brightly under new boss John Hughes and played some good football, but faded when it mattered, while Motherwell, galvanised by former Scotland boss Craig Brown, left their charge too late to threaten Dundee United's third place.

Motherwell and Hibernian did manage to produce the game of the season – not to mention what was possibly the most thrilling game in SPL history – when they served up an incredible 6-6 draw at Fir Park. After going 6-2 down, the home side completed an incredible comeback with an amazing last-gasp goal from Lukas Jutkiewicz that evoked memories of Marco Van Basten's stunner for Holland in the Euro 1988 Final.

It was a good season for the Highland clubs. First there was first division Ross County's fairy-tale Scottish Cup run, in which they saw off three SPL opponents – Hamilton, Hibernian and then, most remarkably, Celtic – en route to the Final. Almost as impressive were the exploits of Inverness Caledonian Thistle, who put together a fine 21-game unbeaten run under Terry Butcher to ensure a return to the top flight next season.

The matter of who would be going the other way went right down to the wire, with Kilmarnock and St Mirren surviving at Falkirk's expense.

Dan Brennan

> "Inconsistency among the chasing pack meant a terrific chance to break the Glasgow duopoly went begging"

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
ANTHONY STOKES (Hibernian)
Hibs might have lost their early momentum collectively, but their former Arsenal and Celtic striker did not. Notching 21 league goals – including a quite brilliant strike against Rangers – was a terrific achievement for a non-Old Firm player and it would be no surprise if he was at a bigger club next term.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
DANNY WILSON (Rangers)
The 18-year-old full-back showed a panache beyond his years in a breakthrough season that earned him awards from fellow pros and media alike, not to mention a likely £4million move to Liverpool.

COACH OF THE SEASON
PETER HOUSTON (Dundee United)
Emerged from a career in the back-room shadows to take over from new Scotland boss Craig Levein at Tannadice and lead United to victory in the Scottish Cup and third place in the SPL.

Coaching class...Houston

PREMIER LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	38	26	9	3	82	28	87
Celtic	38	25	6	7	75	39	81
Dundee Utd	38	17	12	9	55	47	63
Hibernian	38	15	9	14	58	55	54
Motherwell	38	13	14	11	52	54	53
Hearts	38	13	9	16	35	46	48

PREMIER LEAGUE RELEGATION GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hamilton	38	13	10	15	39	46	49
St Johnstone	38	12	11	15	57	61	47
Aberdeen	38	10	11	17	36	52	41
St Mirren	38	7	13	18	36	49	34
Kilmarnock	38	8	9	21	29	51	33
Falkirk	38	6	13	19	31	57	31

SWITZERLAND Basle pip Young Boys

Last-day drama...Young Boys and Scott Sutter (in yellow) fell to Stocker's Basle

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
SEYDOU DOUMBIA
(Young Boys)
Top scorer for the second season running, this time with 30 goals. He will join CSKA Moscow in July.

COACH OF THE SEASON
THORSTEN FINK (Basle)
The German had never coached a top-flight club in his own right before and his appointment was greeted with some scepticism. He responded by winning the double.

NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR
XHERDAN SHAQIRI
(Basle)
The Kosovo-born winger, who moved to Switzerland as a child, made his professional debut at the start of the season and had earned a place in Switzerland's World Cup squad by the end of it.

Eventful season...Shaqiri

BASLE snatched the league crown on the last day of the season from a hapless Young Boys who had led almost uninterrupted since last July.

The two teams – who both enter next season's Champions League – met in Berne on the final day, level on points but with Basle needing only a draw to clinch their 13th title due to a better goal difference.

In the event, the visitors won 2-0 with goals from Valentin Stocker and Scott Chipperfield – who nearly put himself out of Australia's World Cup squad when he failed to clear an advertising hoarding and fell flat on his face while celebrating his strike.

Sadly the game was marred by the almost inevitable crowd trouble in a country which FIFA president Sepp Blatter says is five years behind the rest of Europe in fighting hooliganism.

Basle supporters also ran onto the tracks at the nearby Wankdorf railway station and ransacked trains provided to take them to and from the game. Swiss Railways, who lay on these trains to spare ordinary passengers the ordeal of travelling with unruly supporters, complained that they spend £1.8million a year cleaning up after the hooligans, but its suggestion that the clubs should accept responsibility was angrily refuted, leaving a stalemate which will have to be resolved by next season.

It was Young Boys' third successive second-place finish – they were pipped by Zurich last term and Basle the year before that – and their second under Bosnian coach Vladimir Petkovic.

Basle, on the other hand, completed the double under German coach Thorsten Fink, the former Bayern Munich midfielder, after he replaced Christian Gross, who had two years to run on his contract and whose sacking cost the club a large wad of cash.

Young Boys went top after three games and, apart from one week when Basle briefly overtook them on goal difference, stayed there until the penultimate match.

YB's season fell apart on a rainy night at Lucerne's ramshackle ground when they were hammered 5-1 after a series of defensive blunders, while Basle beat Neuchatel Xamax 3-0 to overhaul Young Boys on goal difference and set up a dramatic finale.

Basle, distracted by the Europa League early on, made a poor start to the campaign and at one point found themselves sixth, 10 points behind YB. But they picked up momentum after the winter break, a 4-0 win at home to YB proving the turning point.

They also won their fifth Swiss Cup in nine seasons, beating second-tier Lausanne 6-0 in front of over 30,000 supporters in their own stadium.

Title-holders Zurich, distracted by taking part in the Champions League group stage, were never in the hunt and eventually finished fifth, replacing coach Bernard Challandes with Urs Fischer with five matches left.

Grasshopper, who at one stage found themselves bottom amid financial difficulties, improved as the season went on and eventually finished third, qualifying for the Europa League along with Lucerne and Cup runners-up Lausanne. The sale of Nassim Ben Khalifa, who helped Switzerland win the Under-17 world championship in Nigeria last year, could help balance the books at Grasshopper.

Aarau finished bottom and were relegated, replaced by Thun – the club who went into free fall after reaching the Champions League group stage in 2005 and who have spent two seasons in the second division.

One of the biggest surprises of the season came at Sion, where Didier Tholot saw out the entire season as coach. Club owner Christian Constantin, who has employed 24 coaches – including himself – since he took over the club in 2003, still managed to take centre stage though, alleging Sion midfielder Serey Die's red card against Grasshopper might have been part of an attempt to throw the match. He reported the matter to the police, but no evidence was found to back this up.

The players' union (SAFP) also asked clubs to sign a code of conduct and demanded more respect for its members, claiming some had been ostracised for failing to sign a new contract or agreeing to be transferred.

"These players were treated badly," said SAFP president Lucien Valloni. "There were even national team players that, from one day to another, had to train with the second team."

Brian Homewood

Basle completed the double after Thorsten Fink had replaced Christian Gross, whose sacking cost the club a large wad of cash

SUPERLIGA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Basle	36	25	5	6	90	46	80
Young Boys	36	25	2	9	78	47	77
Grasshopper	36	21	2	13	65	43	65
Lucerne	36	17	7	12	66	55	58
Sion	36	14	9	13	63	57	51
St Gallen	36	13	7	16	53	56	46
Zurich	36	12	9	15	55	58	45
Xamax	36	11	8	17	55	57	41
Bellinzona	36	7	4	25	42	92	25
Aarau	36	6	5	25	32	88	23

TURKEY "Crocodiles" snap up title

On top...Bursaspor shocked the big four in Turkey

Bursaspor had beaten Besiktas 2-1. The stadium announcer had been misinformed and Bursaspor were champions after all

FOR once, a season in Turkey will not be remembered for refereeing scandals, pitch invasions and coaches being sacked on a monthly basis. Instead, we have witnessed one of the most surprising finishes ever.

Not only did Bursaspor become the first team other than Besiktas, Fenerbahce, Galatasaray and Trabzonspor to win the title, they also claimed it in incredible circumstances, in the final minutes of the final game of the season.

Bursaspor, who are known as "the Crocodiles", thoroughly deserved their victory as they were the better side in all eight games against the big four.

Going into the last day of the season, they would have settled for second place as nobody expected leaders Fenerbahce to drop points against Trabzonspor.

In front of 55,000 fans in their Sukru Saracoglu stadium, Fener were not expected to make the same mistake as four years ago, when they lost the title on the last day of the season following a draw with Denizlispor. And when Spanish striker Daniel Guiza put them ahead early in the game, they seemed on course for the title.

However, Trabzonspor equalised soon afterwards through former Fener forward Burak Yilmaz. With Bursaspor winning 2-0 against Besiktas the title was on its way to a new home, even when Besiktas pulled a goal back to make it 2-1.

But the final days's events were to be shrouded in controversy. With minutes remaining, word reached the stadium announcer in Istanbul that Besiktas had scored a late equaliser to make it 2-2. The Fenerbahce players, believing they had won the title, eased up for the remaining three minutes of the match. On the final whistle, fans stormed onto the pitch and lifted players like Diego Lugano and Gokcek Vederson on their shoulders.

Then the truth emerged: Bursaspor had beaten Besiktas 2-1. The stadium announcer had been misinformed and Bursaspor were champions after all.

The season was not only a disaster for Fenerbahce, who had blown a £65million budget, but also for Galatasaray who spent over £41m, and for Besiktas, double winners the previous season.

In contrast, Bursaspor had a budget of just over £5.5m. Their success was a personal triumph for Ertugrul Saglam, whose reputation as one of Turkey's brightest young coaches took a battering after his Besiktas side were thrashed 8-0 by Liverpool in the Champions League in 2008.

Teams like Bursaspor and Kayserispor, who finished eighth, showed that with a small budget, some good young players, average foreign players and a determined coach they can compete with the big boys.

At the other end of the table Ankaraspor, Denizlispor and Diyarbakırspor were relegated while Karabukspor, Bucaspor and Konyaspor were promoted to the Super League.

Kayserispor's Ariza Makukula was league top scorer with 21 goals.

Mehmet Demircan

SUPER LIG - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bursaspor	34	23	6	5	65	26	75
Fenerbahce	34	23	5	6	61	28	74
Galatasaray	34	19	7	8	61	35	64
Besiktas	34	18	10	6	47	25	64
Trabzonspor	34	16	9	9	53	32	57
Istanbul BB	34	16	8	10	47	44	56
Eskisehirspor	34	15	10	9	44	34	55
Kayserispor	34	14	9	11	45	37	51
Antalyaspor	34	14	7	13	49	38	49
Genclerbirligi	34	12	11	11	38	35	47
Kasimpasa	34	10	11	13	50	53	41
Ankaragucu	34	9	14	11	39	40	41
Gaziantepspor	34	9	13	12	38	39	40
Manisaspor	34	8	13	13	27	34	37
Sivasspor	34	8	10	16	42	59	34
Diyarbakirspor	34	6	9	19	28	54	27
Denizlispor	34	6	8	20	30	49	26
Ankaraspor*	34	0	0	34	0	102	0

**Ankaraspor expelled from league; all games awarded as 3-0 wins to their opponents*

PLAYER OF THE YEAR
VOLKAN SEN (Bursaspor)
The 23-year-old right winger was the champions' most important player and he will be one of the most interesting players in the Champions League next season.

COACH OF THE YEAR
ERTUGRUL SAGLAM (Bursaspor)
Restored his reputation by outdoing expensive foreign coaches like Christoph Daum and Frank Rijkaard. His team played attacking football and showed fighting spirit – a template for other Anatolian [non-Istanbul] teams in the future.

NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR
EMRE COLAK (Galatasaray)
The 19-year-old left-footed midfielder made his debut this season and quickly earned comparisons with Emre Belezoglu.

Fighting spirit...Ertugrul

They thought it was all over...Fenerbahce can't believe they haven't won the title

UKRAINE Shakhtar overhaul Dynamo

THE outcome of this season's title race was heavily influenced by the results of Shakhtar and Dynamo in Europe.

Without the burden of having to qualify for the Champions League group stage, Dynamo were fully concentrated on both European and league matters in the autumn. The Kiev club were also boosted by the arrival of former Russia and CSKA Moscow coach Valery Gazzaev and the return of Andriy Shevchenko from Chelsea.

Dynamo started the campaign brightly, thrashing Chornomorets and Tavriya 5-0 and 6-0 respectively. Playing excellent attacking football, Sheva and co went on their winter holidays unbeaten, having won 13 matches and drawn three.

But unfortunately for Dynamo supporters that flair evaporated after a Champions League exit from arguably the tournament's toughest group, in which they finished bottom against Barcelona, Internazionale and Russian champions Rubin Kazan.

"Truly speaking, the actual Dynamo Kyiv standards do not correspond to the level of the Champions League," admitted president Ihor Surkis. "It is true to say that now we are a club of only Europa League class.

"We hoped to finish third in our very difficult Champions League group but we were deprived of it due to the unpredictable home defeat of Barcelona by Rubin. You know, for us to play in Europe and in the Ukraine league is like flying to Mars and returning back to Earth. Our players simply can't find the motivation for domestic football."

Clearly happy with their domestic form, coach Gazzaev made the strategic mistake of refusing to reinforce his squad during the winter transfer period, claiming: "We are out of Europe and I don't need a single extra player.

"I can't see a problem in winning the league with the same collection of players I started the campaign."

The seven-point gap built up in the first half of the season began to slip away as Dynamo lost concentration and started to drop points. They suffered three defeats, including an unbelievable 1-0 loss to bottom-of-the-table Zakarpattya before the season's defining moment in the penultimate game, when Shakhtar won 1-0 in Donetsk to steal the title.

"We were rightly punished for relaxing," said Gazzaev. "I'm guilty personally for the loss of the title due to my mistakes in not finding the proper motivation for my players in the dressing room."

The signing of Brazilian defender Danilo Silva from Internacional to replace injured Oleh Gusev was made too late to have the real impact on the team's performances.

Shakhtar and their Romanian coach Mircea Lucescu, managed to overcome the deep depression that had set in early in the season. After their shock elimination in the third qualifying round of the Champions League by modest Romanian outfit Timisoara, they went from strength to strength in the second part of the season winning 12 games out of 13. And the key to their fifth title was an excellent balance in midfield, where their Brazilians – Ilsinho, Jadson, Fernandinho and Willian – played wonderfully creative football.

Rinat Akhmetov, Shakhtar's billionaire owner, says the backing of the supporters was also vital.

"We won because all our players, coaches, managers and fans wanted the title," he said. "This is the difference between us and Dynamo.

"I remember the match in the 2006 season when we visited Dynamo. When I saw the half-empty stands I told their president, Ihor Surkis, that their supporters do not want strongly enough for their team to win the league.

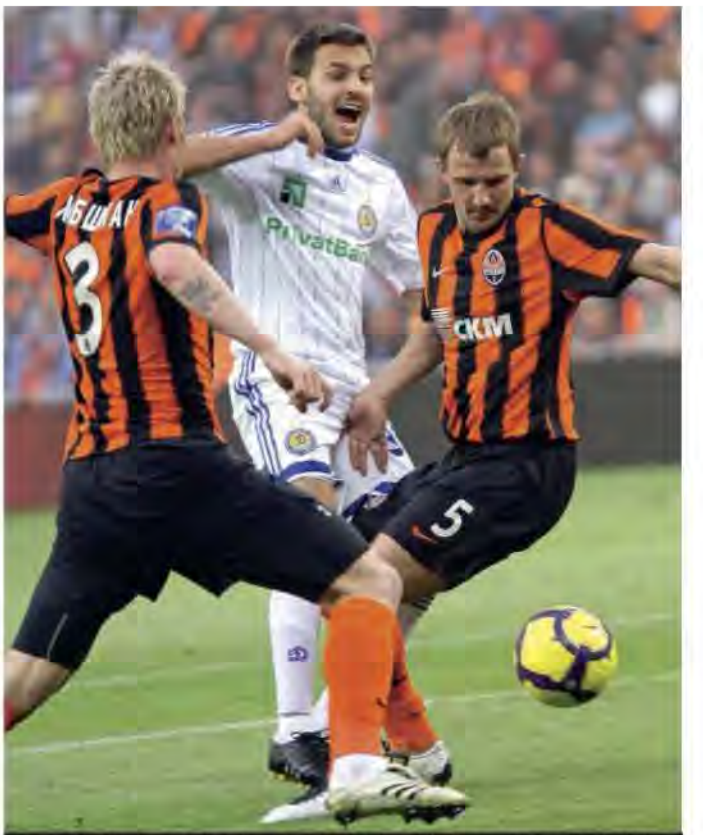
"I repeated the same to him after the final whistle in May this year when more than 52,000 fans turned up in our five-star Donbass Arena to witness Shakhtar's victory over Dynamo."

Metalist, whose coach Myron Markevych took charge of the national team in February, finished third for the fourth season in a row and will enter the Europa League alongside Dnipro, Karpaty and Tavriya. Sadly, Metalist's Valentyn Slyusar – along with Anton Shendryk of Zakarpattya and Arsenal's Oleksandr Danilov – tested positive for banned substances during the season.

Chornomorets were relegated due to the disastrous work of coach Andriy Bal and sports director Oleh Blokhin, while Zakarpattya's win over Dynamo failed to save them from the drop.

Oleg Zadernovsky

> "For us to play in Europe and in the Ukraine league is like flying to Mars and returning back to Earth" *Shakhtar president Ihor Surkis*



Victors...Shakhtar's Tomas Hubschman (no 3) and Oleksandr Kucher stop Dynamo's Milos Ninkovic

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
JACKSON COELHO (Metalist)
Powerful Brazilian forward who performed well throughout the season and scored 16 goals.

COACH OF THE SEASON
SERHIY PUCHKOV (Tavriya)
One of the best of a new generation of coaches in the country. Won the Cup and guided Tavriya to 6th in the league.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
DOUGLAS COSTA (Shakhtar)
Very promising, skilful Brazilian midfielder. Immediately impressed with his ability after joining from Gremio during the winter break.

Cup success...Puchkov

PREMIER LEAGUE – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shakhtar	30	24	5	1	62	18	77
Dynamo	30	22	5	3	61	16	71
Metalist	30	19	5	6	49	23	62
Dnipro	30	15	9	6	48	25	54
Karpaty	30	13	11	6	44	35	50
Tavriya	30	12	9	9	38	38	45
Arsenal	30	11	9	10	44	41	42
Metalurh Donetsk	30	11	7	12	41	33	40
Metalurh Zaporizhiya	30	10	5	15	31	48	35
Vorskla	30	6	13	11	29	32	31
Obolon	30	9	4	17	26	50	31
Illichivets	30	7	8	15	31	56	29
Zorya	30	7	7	16	23	47	28
Kryvbas	30	7	4	19	31	47	25
Chornomorets	30	5	9	16	21	44	24
Zakarpattya	30	5	4	21	18	44	19

AUSTRIA Salzburg retain title in thriller

On top...Salzburg's Simon Cziommer (no 19)

VICTORY over Sturm in Graz on the final day of the season gave Salzburg a sixth championship – which was their second in a row and third since being taken over by energy-drink tycoon Dietrich Mateschitz.

Rapid led the standings going into the winter break, but their hopes suffered a massive blow when they picked up just two points in the first four matches of spring. Big spenders Salzburg were quick to breach the gap and, with the signing of striker Roman Wallner from LASK, coach Huub Stevens' team went from strength to strength.

However, with five games to go, a serious injury to keeper Eddie Gustafsson rocked Salzburg and Austria Wien went on an impressive 11-game unbeaten run, including nine wins, to close the gap.

Going into the final round of matches, Salzburg were a point clear of Austria Wien with Rapid a further two behind, but Wallner repaid his transfer fee with a goal and an assist in the 2-0 title-securing victory against Sturm.

"It was a tough season and we made life pretty hard for ourselves in the dying stages, but we made it in the end and it was well deserved," said Stevens, who celebrated his first league title at club level.

Austria Wien finished second, ahead of city rivals Rapid, and boss Karl Daxbacher said: "It is a considerable satisfaction to have pushed Rapid off the throne. We had an incredible season and I am proud and delighted."

While Salzburg now bid to qualify for the Champions League, Austria Wien and Rapid enter the Europa League, along with Sturm who beat Wiener Neustadt 1-0 in the Cup Final.

"Graz is a football-crazy city and it's great to see our club playing in Europe again next season," said the Sturm president, Hans Rinner.

Austria Karnten – who play in the country's largest and most modern football stadium – went down with fewer than half the points of their closest rival, Kapfenberg. The club was originally set-up in Klagenfurt by the late Jorg Haider, but without his support they lost most of their sponsors and have been denied a licence to play in next year's second league, leaving their future up in the air.

They will be replaced in the top flight by second division champions Wacker Innsbruck.

Harry Miltner

BUNDESLIGA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Salzburg	36	22	10	4	68	27	76
Austria Wien	36	23	6	7	60	34	75
Rapid	36	21	10	5	80	38	73
Sturm	36	16	10	10	50	36	58
W Neustadt	36	13	8	15	54	58	47
Mattersburg	36	12	5	19	45	71	41
LASK	36	9	13	14	59	70	40
Ried	36	10	8	18	39	47	38
Kapfenberger	36	8	9	19	44	67	33
Austria Karnten	36	2	9	25	29	80	15

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
STEFFEN HOFMANN (Rapid)
Although the German failed to lead his team to silverware, he captained Rapid to the group stage of the Europa League and wiped out Czech legend Antonin Panenka's league scoring record for a midfielder by finding the net 20 times during the season.

COACH OF THE SEASON
KARL DAXBACHER (Austria Wien)
Despite working with a much smaller budget than both Salzburg and Rapid, and having to cope with the absence of key players through injury, he led his side to the runners-up spot.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
ROBERT WALTNER (Mattersburg)
The former Hungary striker played a major role in his club's survival in the top flight, scoring 14 goals.

BULGARIA Capital loss as Lovech shine

SOFIA clubs were left empty-handed for only the second time as provincial sides Lovech and Beroe won the league and Bulgarian Cup respectively.

Lovech won their third title after a poor start to the season, and defeat in the preliminary round of the Europa League saw coach Stanimir Stoilov – who also manages the national team – replaced by Angel Chervenkov, who previously led Hearts in the Scottish Premier League.

Chervenkov changed the team's style of play, making them more aggressive yet skilful and Lovech will now enter next season's Champions League in the second qualifying round.

After a 2-0 defeat by Lovech in November, CSKA coach Luboslav Penev dropped nine players from his squad – only for president Dimitar Borissov to overrule him. Penev offered his resignation, but the club refused to accept it. He was eventually sacked two months later in the mid-season break.

Penev was replaced in January by Romanian loan Andone, who caused divisions within the squad by bringing in new players from his homeland. Andone left for Rapid Bucharest, leaving Adalbert Zafirov – who only had a temporary coaching licence – and Dimitar Penev to see out the season. CSKA eventually finished runners-up and will be led in the Europa League by Pavel Dochev, back home after 18 years in Germany.

Levski were just as bad. Three months after Serbian coach Ratko Dostanich replaced Emil Velev, sporting director Georgi Ivanov took charge – but because he didn't have a coaching licence the team was officially led by Antoni Zdravkov. Only a poor run from Lokomotiv Sofia helped Levski steal third place and earn a Europa League campaign in which they will be led by new coach Yasen Petrov.

At one point Lokomotiv looked like Lovech's only title challengers, but failure to win any of their last seven games cost them a place in Europe and Serbian coach Dragan Okuka his job. Slavia also sacked their coach, replacing Velislav Vutsov with ex-Levski boss Velev after missing out on Europe.

Botev, expelled because of financial problems, will play in the second tier next season, along with Sportist and Lokomotiv Mezdra. Coming up are Vidima-Rakovski Sevlievo, Kaliakra Kavarna and Sofia's Akademik.

Beroe claimed their first Bulgarian Cup by beating Chernomorets Pomorie 1-0 in the Final.

Rumen Paytashev

A PFG – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lovech	30	22	4	4	59	17	70
CSKA	30	16	10	4	51	25	58
Levski	30	17	6	7	57	26	57
Lok Sofia	30	15	7	8	47	33	52
Chernomorets	30	15	6	9	44	29	51
Slavia	30	14	8	8	34	28	50
Cherno More	30	13	9	8	40	28	48
Minyor	30	13	6	11	38	26	45
Pirin	30	11	10	9	34	32	43
Beroe	30	10	8	12	30	36	38
Montana	30	9	9	12	30	37	36
Lok Plovdiv	30	9	6	15	36	52	33
Sliven	30	9	5	16	29	40	32
Lok Mezdra	30	7	6	17	30	48	27
Sportist	30	5	4	21	23	59	19
Botev*	30	1	4	25	12	78	1

*Botev expelled from league because of financial problems; all games after their expulsion were awarded as 3-0 wins to their opponents, and they also had six points deducted

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
IVELIN POPOV (Lovech)
The champions' captain was a true leader and key figure in the club's triumph.

On a high...Iliev

COACH OF THE SEASON
ILIAN ILIEV (Beroe)
One of the most respected coaches in Bulgaria is now the most popular man in Stara Zagora after Beroe's cup win.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
VLADIMIR GADZHEV (Levski)
Having arrived from Greek club Panathinaikos he soon demonstrated his ability as a quality playmaker.

CROATIA Turbulent times for winners

The Dinamo effect...another title

FEW were surprised that Dinamo won their fifth successive championship, but what should have been a joyous ending to the season was spoiled by a run of poor results, rumours of dressing-room unrest and the ultimate resignation of coach Krunoslav Jurcic.

After a brilliant start to the season the Zagreb side fell away badly, but they did have the satisfaction of securing the title against their arch-rivals and runners-up Hajduk.

"We need to enjoy these moments of domination of Croatian football," said Dinamo goalkeeper Tomislav Butina. "It will not always be like this so it will be nice to remember these days."

Hajduk themselves managed to rescue a disappointing league campaign with victory in the Croatian Cup. They claimed their first piece of silverware for five years with a 4-1 aggregate Final victory over Sibenik.

Even though they lost, it was an historic moment for Sibenik, who had already secured their biggest success in simply reaching the showpiece. Their reward is a place alongside Hajduk in the Europa League, where they will be joined by Cibalia – the season's biggest success story.

With limited resources, Cibalia finished just one point adrift of runners-up Hajduk and five behind the champions. The Vinkovci-based club were relegated a few years ago but can now look forward to continental football in the autumn.

PRVA HNL – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo	30	18	8	4	70	20	62
Hajduk	30	17	7	6	50	21	58
Cibalia	30	16	9	5	46	20	57
Sibenik	30	14	8	8	34	37	50
Karlovac	30	12	11	7	32	23	47
Osijek	30	13	8	9	49	36	47
Slaven	30	11	10	9	44	45	43
Lokomotiva	30	12	6	12	35	38	42
Rijeka	30	10	10	10	49	44	40
Varteks	30	9	9	12	36	43	36
Istra	30	9	8	13	31	40	35
Zadar	30	9	7	14	27	41	34
Inter	30	10	3	17	36	50	33
Zagreb	30	9	6	15	43	49	33
Medimurje	30	8	5	17	37	61	29
Sesvete	30	3	5	22	30	81	14

PLAYER OF THE YEAR
SENIJAD IBRICIC (Hajduk)
The 24-year-old Bosnia and Herzegovina striker scored 17 league goals and was on target in both legs of the Cup Final.

COACH OF THE YEAR
STANKO MRSIC (Cibalia)
Has given the Vinkovci-based club, who were relegated a few years ago, European football next season.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
MATEJ DELAC (Inter Zapresic)
This 17-year-old goalkeeper, who made his top-flight debut at just 15 (becoming the youngest player in the history of the league) is set to join Chelsea in August.

CZECH REP Unbeaten champs nick it

Tough at the top...Sparta (in red) kick on

SPARTA may have won their 35th title without losing a game, but it wasn't as easy as it sounds. Jozef Chovanec's side drew 14 of their 30 games and only clinched matters on a tense final day with two other teams still in the race.

The former national coach's bold decision to fashion a younger, hungrier Sparta squad upon resuming coaching duties at the club in 2008 paid off. A dearth of goals in the autumn eased when midfielder Libor Sionko returned from Copenhagen and the controversial addition of former Slavia captain Erich Brabec from Turkey's Ankaragucu to the back four lessened Sparta's reliance on captain Tomas Repka.

Teplice were frontrunners and may have gone into the winter break in even better shape but for an outbreak of swine flu. With just 12 fit first-teamers, the *Sklari* (glassmakers) were refused a postponement for a November game in Olomouc and lost 6-2. As the situation worsened, they were allowed to defer their final autumn game, allowing Sparta to draw level on points, and their title challenge faltered in the spring.

Instead, Ostrava and Jablonec became the new threats. New coach Miroslav Koubek made a solid start at Ostrava, where teenage forward Matej Vydra and Cape Verde international defender Fernando Neves both did well.

Frantisek Komnacky's Jablonec did well despite an average home crowd of 3,877. The north Bohemian side were runners-up and reached the Czech Cup Final – where they lost 2-1 to Viktoria Plzen, who enter the Europa League along with Ostrava and Jablonec.

Title holders Slavia struggled to replace the likes of defender Marek Suchy (on loan to Spartak Moscow). Poor form cost coach Karel Jarolim his job in March but stand-in Frantisek Cipro couldn't improve matters and Slavia ultimately missed out on Europe.

Bohemians Praha (Strizkov) and their controversial chairman Karel Kapr provided the season's two biggest scandals. In March, Kapr alleged that Olomouc goalkeeper Petr Drobisz had offered Bohemians players money to throw a game at the end of last season to help Olomouc qualify for the Europa League. But at Czech FA hearings, Kapr was unable to back up his claims.

Then in April they refused to take the field for an away game against Bohemians 1905 – Prague rivals with whom Kapr's club have been involved in a bitter dispute over the rights to the Bohemians name and legacy. The away side's co-owner, Josef Jicha, said this was because a bus carrying his club's fans had been attacked. But Kapr said he'd ordered his players not to take the field because Bohemians 1905 weren't legitimate members of the Czech FA.

Losing patience, the FA hit Kapr's club with a 20-point deduction and £200,000 fine for the incidents; Kapr was banned from football for two years.

Not surprisingly, Bohemians Praha (Strizkov) were relegated, on -4 points, along with perpetual strugglers Kladno. They will be replaced by promoted Hradec Kralove and Usti nad Labem.

Sam Beckwith

GAMBRINUS LIGA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sparta	30	16	14	0	42	14	62
Jablonec	30	18	7	5	42	24	61
Ostrava	30	17	9	4	47	25	60
Teplice	30	15	10	5	44	25	55
Plzen	30	12	12	6	42	33	48
Olomouc	30	14	5	11	49	36	47
Slavia	30	11	8	11	37	35	41
M Boleslav	30	11	6	13	47	41	39
Liberec	30	10	7	13	34	39	37
Pribram	30	10	6	14	35	41	36
Brno	30	9	8	13	31	40	35
Boh'ians 1905	30	8	10	12	21	29	34
C Budejovice	30	7	10	13	24	35	31
Slovacko	30	8	6	16	28	42	30
Kladno	30	7	4	19	24	50	25
Bohemians*	30	4	4	22	27	65	-4

**20pts deducted*

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
TOMAS REPKA (Sparta)
The fiery 36-year-old anchored a defence that conceded just 14 times in 30 league games – and even headed the goal that clinched the title.

Veteran...Repka

COACH OF THE SEASON
FRANTISEK KOMNACKY (Jablonec)
Despite more limited resources than many rivals, he led his side to a best-ever runners-up spot and to the Cup final.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
MATEJ VYDRA (Ostrava)
Signed from second division Vysocina Jihlava in January, the teenage forward quickly became a key player for the title challengers, scoring four goals in the spring.

HUNGARY Debrecen's domestic treble

ANOTHER season of match-fixing scandals, low crowds and international failure culminated in a two-way tussle between reigning champions Debrecen and Fehervar. Under wily coach Gyorgy Mezey, Fehervar had led the way in the league only to be reeled in by Debrecen, whose Champions League efforts in the autumn had cost them domestic points.

On the last day, as Debrecen trailed 1-0 away to Kecskemet, Fehervar were holding third-placed Gyor and heading for the title. But there was a twist: with just eight minutes left, Lazar Stanisic put Gyor ahead, and the champions grabbed their fifth title in six seasons.

Fehervar's advance was helped by the goals of 22-year-old Serbian striker Nemanja Nikolic, who joined during the winter break from Kaposvar. Fellow strikers Andre Alves, Illes Sitku and Laszlo Lencse added to the goals tally.

However, their season turned on a 3-2 defeat at Debrecen four games from the end. By the time Ujpest turned up at the Sostoi Stadium two rounds later, a tired Fehervar lost another early lead. Events on the final day had a certain inevitability about them.

Days later, Andras Herczeg's team did the double, by beating Zalaegerszeg 3-2 in the Hungarian Cup Final, this on top of a 2-1 League Cup win over Paks before a crowd of 1,000 in Kecskemet. Debrecen head for the Champions League, Zalaegerszeg join Fehervar and Gyor in the Europa League.

Debrecen's keeper – Djordje Pantic or Vukasin Poleksic – played behind a barely changed defence. Even a fatal car crash involving full-back Laszlo Bodnar (a cyclist was killed on the eve of a Champions League game) didn't affect their unity. Honduras midfielder Luis Ramos has added flair to an otherwise unchanged midfield.

The departure of international forward Gergely Rudolf to Genoa will deplete Debrecen's strike force, while match-fixing rumours hang over one of their European matches last year. Honved's foreign games have also come under scrutiny.

The dismissal of Willie McStay and the return of Geza Meszoly, Hungary's most promising young coach, led to a late burst of form by Ujpest. A 5-4 triumph by Meszoly's men over MTK was surely the match of the season.

Relegation for Nyiregyhaza and Diosgyor means the game in the north-east rust belt will surely suffer. They will be replaced by Szolnok, up from NBII East, hardly a football hotbed. Either Siofok or Gyirmot will be promoted from NBII West.

Peterjon Cresswell

NBI – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Debrecen	30	20	2	8	63	37	62
Fehervar	30	18	7	5	59	31	61
Gyor	30	15	12	3	38	18	57
Ujpest	30	17	4	9	49	39	55
Zalaegerszeg	30	15	8	7	59	44	53
MTK	30	12	7	11	52	41	43
Ferencvaros	30	10	11	9	34	35	41
Szombathely	30	10	9	11	46	49	39
Honved	30	9	11	10	38	35	38
Kecskemet	30	10	7	13	50	56	37
Papa	30	10	5	15	39	50	35
Kaposvar	30	8	8	14	38	50	32
Vasas	30	8	7	15	39	61	31
Paks	30	7	10	13	30	44	31
Nyiregyhaza	30	6	9	15	41	60	27
Diosgyor	30	4	5	21	31	56	17

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
NEMANJA NIKOLIC (Fehervar)
The young Serbian striker who, having played for lesser Hungarian sides since 2006, rose to prominence during his side's title challenge.

COACH OF THE SEASON
ANDRAS HERCZEG (Debrecen)
Proved his worth by retaining the title at the club he has served in various capacities for many years.

Loyal...Herczeg

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
DAVID BARCZI (Ujpest)
The midfielder is one of several promising youngsters currently under Geza Meszoly, but is the only one to have come through the club's ranks.

ISRAEL Dramatic finale for Hapoel

HAVING increased the top flight from 12 to 16 teams and introduced a new two-stage format, the Israeli Premier League could not have experienced a more exciting climax.

Reigning champions Maccabi Haifa ended the regular season six points ahead of Hapoel Tel Aviv and, with all points being halved, went into the play-offs three points to the good.

Going into the final game, at Bnei Yehuda, they were still two points clear of Hapoel, away at Beitar. With both games level at 1-1 in the final stages – and Hapoel down to 10 men from the 29th minute – the title seemed destined to return to Maccabi Haifa.

However, a last-minute goal by Eran Zahavi sealed victory for Hapoel and saw them cancel Maccabi Haifa's two-point lead and pip them on goal difference. "I've never cried before over football – this is the first time," said Hapoel coach Eli Guttman, whose side won their 13th league championship. A 3-1 victory against Bnei Yehuda in the State Cup Final made it a fourth double.

Hapoel only lost once – to Maccabi Haifa – and can look forward to taking part in the second qualifying round of

Last-minute drama...Zahavi

the next Champions League. "This team is the best ever in Israeli football," added Guttman. "It's a sweet end to an amazing season in which the team won its Europa League group ahead of clubs like Hamburg, Rapid Wien and Celtic."

Meanwhile, Maccabi Haifa, Maccabi Tel Aviv and Bnei Yehuda will all enter next season's Europa League.

Of the six teams promoted to make up the numbers, only Be'er Sheva managed to avoid the relegation play-off group, from which Ra'anana and Maccabi Ahi Nazareth went down. Taking their places are Ironi Kiriat-Shmona and Hapoel Ashkelon.

PREMIER LEAGUE – CHAMPIONSHIP GRP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hap Tel Aviv	35	25	9	1	87	26	49
Maccabi Haifa	35	28	3	4	72	16	49
Mac Tel Aviv	35	17	9	9	52	35	34
Bnei Yehuda	35	14	11	10	43	34	31
Beitar	35	14	7	14	50	44	26
Ashdod	35	11	10	14	36	45	22

PREMIER LEAGUE – MIDDLE GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bnei Sakhnin	33	13	8	12	31	31	27
M Petach Tikva	33	10	11	12	44	47	24
Be'er Sheva	33	11	10	12	49	55	23
Netanya	33	10	9	14	44	47	21

PREMIER LEAGUE – RELEGATION GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hapoel Haifa	35	10	9	16	44	50	23
Acre	35	7	14	14	38	52	23
H Petach Tikva	35	8	14	13	28	48	23
Ramat Gan	35	9	11	15	34	49	22
Ra'anana	35	6	10	19	33	58	18
Ahi Nazareth	35	7	7	21	33	81	16

PLAYER OF THE SEAON
SHLOMI ARBEITMAN (Maccabi Haifa)
A natural target man with a good left foot, the 25-year-old's fifth season with Maccabi Haifa was easily his best and he finished the league's top scorer with 28 goals.

COACH OF THE SEASON
ELI GUTTMAN (Hapoel Tel Aviv)
Nicknamed "The German" for his disciplined approach to the game, he won his second league title – having led Hapoel Haifa to victory in 1999.

Disciplined...Guttman

POLAND Lech's injury-time title

NO one was surprised when pre-season favourites Wisla went into the spring five points ahead of second-place Legia. However, when the title-holders picked up only one point in their next three games, coach Maciej Skorza was sacked even though his side were still top of the table.

His shock replacement was former boss Henryk Kasperczak, who had also lost a court case against the club last October over money owed to him.

With Legia regularly dropping points, it did not seem too difficult for Kasperczak to win his fourth title with Wisla. But an old Polish proverb says "where two fight each other, the third takes advantage", and Lech came up on the rails to take the title with an unbeaten league run of 22 games from October.

The championship was decided in injury time during the penultimate round of games. Wisla led Cracovia 1-0 in the Krakow derby after 90 minutes while Lech (with one point less) were drawing 1-1 with Ruch in Chorzow. But when Wisla defender Mariusz Jop put through his own goal and Lech's Belarus midfielder Sergey Krivets – an excellent winter signing from BATE Borisov – scored for the Poznan side, Lech were champions for the sixth time.

"It was the most beautiful adventure of my life," said coach Jacek Zielinski, whose club had been waiting for the title for 17 years. During that time they had been relegated and only avoided bankruptcy thanks to a merger with Amica Wronki in 2006.

These days Lech are one of the best-run clubs in the country and when work is finished on their stadium it will be the biggest club ground in Poland, with a capacity of 42,000.

The club's slogan is "we would like to be better" and next season they will attempt to become the first Polish club to reach the group stage of the Champions League since 1996. That, however, will be made harder by the loss of striker Robert Lewandowski who will move on, probably to Borussia Dortmund. Wisla and third-placed Ruch will play in the Europa League.

Legia, who finished fourth, were the biggest disappointment of the season, while Polonia Warsaw, another team with European aspirations, ended up only just managing to avoid relegation. They survived by beating Legia 1-0 in their penultimate game – a first home victory over their city rivals for 60 years.

Widzew Lodz, European Cup semi-finalists in 1983, were promoted after two seasons in the second tier.

Dariusz Kurowski

EKSTRAKLASA - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lech	30	19	8	3	51	20	65
Wisla	30	19	5	6	48	20	62
Ruch	30	16	5	9	40	30	53
Legia	30	15	7	8	36	22	52
Belchatow	30	13	9	8	37	27	48
Korona	30	9	10	11	35	41	37
Polonia Bytom	30	9	10	11	29	31	37
Lechia	30	9	10	11	30	32	37
Slask	30	8	12	10	32	33	36
Zaglebie	30	8	11	11	30	38	35
Jagiellonia*	30	11	11	8	29	27	34
Cracovia	30	9	7	14	25	39	34
Polonia Warsaw	30	9	6	15	25	38	33
Arka	30	7	7	16	28	39	28
Odra	30	7	6	17	27	45	27
Piast	30	7	6	17	30	50	27

* 10pts deducted for involvement in a corruption scandal

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
ROBERT LEWANDOWSKI (Lech)
Confirmed his star potential by finishing as the league's top scorer with 18 goals.

Debut triumph...Zielinski

COACH OF THE SEASON
JACEK ZIELINSKI (Lech)
Replaced current national coach Franciszek Smuda as boss of Lech in June 2009 and won the title in only his first season in Poznan.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
ARTUR SOBIECH (Ruch)
Talented young striker who received his first call-up to the national team in May.

SERBIA Partizan do the hat-trick

Party time...Partizan celebrate their title

PARTIZAN'S third successive championship – their 22nd in total – was achieved with an unblemished league campaign that saw the Belgrade club finish seven points ahead of city rivals Red Star.

But it was not all plain sailing. Having replaced coach Slavisa Jokanovic with Goran Stevanovic after their failure to qualify for the Champions League group stage, Partizan trailed Red Star by four points. in mid-April. A 3-1 home defeat by Vojvodina in the Serbian Cup semi-finals led to another change in command, with Serbia's Under-19 coach Aleksandar Stanojevic taking charge. Under his guidance, Partizan enjoyed seven successive victories, including a crucial 1-0 win in the Belgrade derby, and also profited from several slip-ups by Red Star who, as it turned out, were undermined by their own managerial comings and goings.

Vladimir Petrovic, who took over struggling Red Star last summer, was controversially fired in mid-March even though he had led a modest squad to the top of the table. Under new coach Ratko Dostanic, they initially played with more flair, but eventually dropped points and lost the "Eternal Derby".

So, in spite of the two coaching changes, the departure of sports director Ivan Tomic and the controversial sacking of captain and defensive rock Nenad Dordevic in the winter break, Partizan came through.

Not to mention, of course, the accusations from Red Star's chairman Vladan Lukic that Partizan were favoured in the title race by FA president Tomislav Karadzic, who is a former Partizan chairman.

Red Star took some consolation with a 3-0 victory in the Cup Final against Vojvodina. The club from Novi Sad started the campaign with big ambitions, but finished fifth and missed out on a place in the Europa League.

As ever, there were rumours about match-fixing and terrible problems with hooliganism, while infrastructure was still poor with most stadiums having neither covered stands nor floodlights. BSK Borac and Metalac even had to play their home games at other venues as their grounds didn't meet the necessary standards.

Vladimir Novak

SUPERLIGA - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Partizan	30	24	6	0	63	14	78
Red Star	30	23	2	5	53	17	71
OFK	30	15	5	10	38	33	50
Spartak	30	14	7	9	34	27	49
Vojvodina	30	13	6	11	51	30	45
Jagodina	30	12	7	11	38	34	43
Javor	30	8	14	8	22	23	38
Rad	30	10	7	13	38	39	37
Metalac	30	10	5	15	24	39	35
Smederevo	30	8	10	12	23	30	34
Borac	30	9	7	14	21	34	34
BSK	30	9	6	15	27	37	33
Cukaricki	30	9	5	16	25	46	32
Hajduk	30	7	9	14	28	40	30
Napredak	30	7	8	15	30	44	29
Mladi Radnik	30	5	10	15	19	47	25

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
DRAGAN MRDA (Vojvodina)
The league's top scorer with 22 goals earned a place in Serbia's World Cup squad.

COACH OF THE SEASON
DEJAN DURDEVIC (OFK)
Against all the odds, guided the young Belgrade team to third place in the league and the semi-finals of the Cup.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
RADOSAV PETROVIC (Partizan)
Not only put in strong displays as a holding midfielder, but also scored seven goals, including the winner in the Belgrade derby, to cement his World Cup place.

ALBANIA
Champs' losing finish

All's well that ends well...Dinamo

EVEN seven successive defeats at the end of the season could not prevent Dinamo Tirana from claiming their 18th championship in the club's 60th anniversary year.

They even lost their first game of the season, but a run of 16 games unbeaten saw coach Shkelqim Muca's side home with four games to go.

Dinamo go into the Champions League at the second qualifying round next season, while eventual runners-up Besa, KF Tirana and Laci – who were only promoted the previous season – enter the Europa League.

Besa also won the Albanian Cup, beating Vllaznia 2-1 in the Final with an extra-time winner from Paulin Dhembi. It was a sweet moment for coach Shpetim Duro, who was sacked in the week before the Final and then reappointed two days later after his players demanded his reinstatement.

"With everything that happened, I am very proud of our guys," said Duro, whose team had trailed with five minutes of normal time remaining.

"They never gave up, even when they were down. This shows the heart this team has."

Meanwhile, relegated Apolonia and Gramozi will be replaced by Bylis and Elbasani.

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
ELIS BAKAJ (Dinamo Tirana)
The 22-year-old scored 15 times in 29 league appearances and has been linked with a move to a bigger league.

COACH OF THE SEASON
STAVRI NICA (Laci)
Kept his squad together during a mid-season dip in form and guided them into Europe.

BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA
Osim's happy return

EIGHT years after leading Zeljeznicar to the championship, Amar Osim returned to Sarajevo and won the league once more.

Having coached the side to the title in 2001 and 2002, Osim was sacked in 2003 and spent time in Japan before going back to his home town last July.

Fifth at the end of autumn, things were not immediately looking too good for the 42-year-old, but a 2-0 win away to Siroki Brijeg in their second game after the break ended their opponents' unbeaten home run and spurred Zeljeznicar on to the title.

They clinched the crown with a 4-1 win over Laktasi with Osim claiming: "We have waited for a long time, a full eight years, to come back to the top and we expect to stay here for a long time. Zeljeznicar will play a significant role in the Premier Liga of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the coming seasons."

Their agenda next season will now also include the Champions League qualifiers, while Borac, who stopped Zeljeznicar doing the double by beating them on away goals in the two-legged Bosnian Cup Final, go into the Europa League with Siroki Brijeg and Zrinjski.

Modrica and Laktasi were relegated and replaced by Buducnost Banovici and Drina Zvornik.

Young talent...Sehic

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
IBRAHIM SEHIC (Zeljeznicar)
The youngest captain in the league, as well as in the history of his club, the 21-year-old conceded fewer goals than any other first-choice goalkeeper in the league.

COACH OF THE SEASON
AMAR OSIM (Zeljeznicar)
Sacked by JEF United in 2007, he came home and won his third Bosnian championship at the Grbavica Stadium.

MACEDONIA
Season of turmoil

GORAN PANDEV MAY have won the Champions League with his new club Internazionale, but this season was largely one to forget for Macedonian football. The clubs' financial crisis, player strikes over unpaid wages, the disqualification of two ex-champions and the eight-year exclusion of Pobeda from all football activities were things to be ashamed of.

As a result, attendances were down, sponsors are leaving, and gifted players and the best coaches seek a better future abroad. The national team featured no players from the domestic championship.

The 18th championship started with 12 clubs, but finished with nine and the top three clubs from Division B – Skendija, Skopje and Napredok – will replace Pobeda, Makedonija and Sloga.

Only 15 rounds took place with all dozen teams competing. The season's key moment was the re-election of Haralampie Hadzi-Risteski as FA president, a move which prompted four teams to quit the league. Two former champions, Makedonija and Sloga, were relegated, while Pelister and Turnovo changed their minds and carried on playing in the championship.

Vardar, the country's most popular and successful club, struggled to finish the season after losing players and had to borrow others from Makedonija.

In such circumstances, a first title for Renova – who were founded seven years ago – left a bitter taste. Renova will play in the Champions League qualifiers next season, while Rabotnicki, Metalurg and Macedonian Cup winners Teteks will participate in the Europa League.

Michel Stojmanovski

Germany calling...Ibraimi

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
BESART IBRAIMI (Renova)
The 23-year-old forward scored 11 goals in 15 matches before he joined Schalke in January.

COACH OF THE SEASON
VLATKO KOSTOV (Renova)
Steered village club Renova to their first league title.

GEORGIA
Troubled times

PRE-SEASON anarchy, resignation of top officials, drugs scandals and shock title-winners characterised one of the most turbulent seasons Georgian football has ever seen.

One week before the start of the season, Mglebi and Meshketi withdrew due to financial reasons – allowing relegated Gagra and Spartaki to retain their status.

Meanwhile, Olimpi sacked coach Varlam Kilasoniya before the big kick-off and then fired replacement Otar Korgalidze three months later to make way for the experienced Temur Makharadze, who eventually led the club from Rustavi to the title.

The country's biggest club Dinamo Tbilisi surprisingly released striker Giorgi Merebishvili to Serb outfit Vojvodina during the winter break and, unable to find a proper replacement, failed to mount a sustained challenge.

They are joined in next year's Europa League by Zestaponi – who invested heavily in the transfer market – and deposed champions WIT Georgia, who paid the price after the retirement of their productive coach Nestor Mumladze.

Gagra's relegation surprised nobody as they were forced to play their home matches in Tbilisi for political reasons and they went down with Lokomotivi Tbilisi.

The season was marked by ugly scenes of fighting on the pitch involving the players and fans. The game between Zestaponi and Olimpi was abandoned in the last minute with the score at 1–1. The result was cancelled and both teams awarded a 0–3 loss.

And Dmitri Ramishvili, the league's president, was forced to retire after drug accusations that also involved internationals Levan Tskitishvili and Rati Alexsidze.

Oleg Zadernovsky

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
ANDERSON AQUINO (Olimpi)
In his first season on loan from Brazilian side Atletico Paranaense, the 24-year-old became the first foreigner to win the local Golden Boot award with 26 league goals.

No1...Anderson Aquino

COACH OF THE SEASON
TEMUR MAKHARADZE (Olimpi)
After 30 years as a coach in his homeland he finally caught the big fish by guiding Olimpi to the Umaslegi title win.

MALTA
Birkirkara see off Valletta

AGAINST all odds, Birkirkara overcame the stern challenge of pre-season favourites Valletta to become the new champions of Malta.

Although Valletta won 4-2 when the two sides met on the final day of the season at the National Stadium, Birkirkara had already been crowned champions a week earlier – beating Tarxien Rainbows to seal the third title in their history.

Head coach Paul Zammit, who also tasted title triumph with Valletta in 2008, said: "This success has to be attributed to my squad and my players, who showed a very professional, aggressive and positive attitude during this very difficult season."

Despite a summer spending spree that included the acquisition of former Holland international Jordi Cruyff, Valletta had to console themselves with success in the one-off National League 100 Years Trophy – a competition that was set up by the FA to commemorate 100 years of National League football on the island – and the Maltese Cup, beating surprise package Qormi 2-1 in the Final.

Qormi striker Camilo Da Silva Sanvezzo finished as the League's top scorer with 24 goals.

Birkirkara will now represent Malta in the forthcoming Champions League competition, while Valletta will participate in the Europa League with Sliema Wanderers, who beat Qormi in a play-off.

Msida St Joseph and Dingli Swallows were relegated, while Marsaxlokk bounced back to play in the top flight, along with Vittoriosa Stars.

Domenic Aquilina

Underdogs...Birkirkara lift the title

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
TREVOR CILIA (Birkirkara)
Scored crucial goals and then crowned a fabulous season by being called into the Malta squad for a friendly international against Germany.

COACH OF THE SEASON
PAUL ZAMMIT (Birkirkara)
A key figure in the club's success. He is a shrewd tactician who recovered after being snubbed by Valletta last season.

MOLDOVA
Sheriff triumph again

EVEN a mid-season change of coach – assistant Andrei Sosnitski replacing Leonid Koutchuk – could not stop Sheriff's domination of the domestic season as the team from Tiraspol won a 10th successive league title and third consecutive double.

Elsewhere, though, some things did change: Iskra-Stal were runners-up for the first time and Olimpia finished third for the first time since 1995. But some previously strong teams struggled financially. Nistru finished bottom of the 12-team league, but will not be demoted as no second-tier team could obtain a licence.

With the best young players going abroad – mostly to Russia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan – old timers dominated the season. Oleg Shishkin, 35, and Adrian Sosnovschi, 33, inspired Olimpia and Zimbru respectively.

Sheriff will enter next season's Champions League in the second qualifying round, while Moldovan Cup runners-up Dacia, Iskra-Stal and Olimpia head for the Europa League.

Miron Goihman

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
VAZHA TARKHNISHVILI
(Sheriff)
The 38-year-old captain was a solid presence in his team's defence – which only let in eight goals all season.

COACH OF THE SEASON
VLAD GOIAN (Iskra-Stal)
Led his club to their best-ever league finish.

MONTENEGRO
Yet another new champion

THE fourth season of the Montenegrin championship saw a fourth champion as Rudar followed in the footsteps of Zeta (2007), Buducnost (2008) and Mogren (2009) to win their first title in their 90-year history.

It looked as if Buducnost would repeat their success of two years ago, especially after a run of 12 consecutive victories, but – mostly due to internal problems (and delays in paying players' wages in March) – they then suffered two defeats, including a 2-1 loss away to Rudar, and surrendered their crown.

Buducnost also had to face playing many games with practically no fans after their supporters boycotted the club and demanded the resignation of club president Tomislav Celebic. After the defeat to Rudar, coach Mihailo Ivanovic was sacked and replaced with newcomer Nenad Vukcevic, and it is likely that the club will be overhauled this summer with a new coach, new players and a new chairman.

Rudar, from the small mining town of Pljevlja (population 20,000), didn't have an amazing squad, but functioned well as a unit and earned their success thanks to a sound financial base. Some said this was hardly surprising, given allegations of match fixing and that club boss Dusko Saric is the younger brother of drug baron Darko Saric.

Last year's champions Mogren, by far the strongest team, struggled. Matters were not helped when coach Dejan Vukicevic resigned in April after losing to Rudar. Kom Podgorica were relegated after finishing bottom.

Vladimir Novak

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
PREDRAG RANDELOVIC
(Rudar)
The new champions' captain, key player and top scorer (19 goals).

COACH OF THE SEASON
NEBOJSA VIGNJEVIC
(Rudar)
A prime candidate to take over at Buducnost last summer, the Serb left Grbalj and led Rudar to victory.

NORTHERN IRELAND
Blues bounce back

AFTER losing their grip on the league and Irish Cup the previous campaign, Linfield bounced back to claim the double, with David Jeffrey's charges eventually ending the season five points ahead of runners-up Cliftonville and nine clear of previous champions Glentoran.

Linfield's campaign actually got off to a poor start and Jeffrey was under severe pressure from supporters and directors. By January they looked anything but possible champions as Cliftonville, Crusaders and Glentoran all had their moments.

However, with the strongest squad in the league, the Blues eventually ground down the opposition. A psychological turning point was the return on loan in January of Peter Thompson from Stockport County. The bustling striker had spent 18 months in England and his absence certainly contributed to Linfield's loss of the title in 2009.

Cliftonville, under manager Eddie Patterson, always played good football and surpassed all expectations to finish second, while reigning champions Glentoran never rose to the heights of the previous campaign and manager Alan McDonald resigned in March to be replaced by former Glens' player Scott Young. They had even signed former Northern Ireland winger Keith Gillespie in August, but the 35-year-old took time to settle and the players around him failed to rise to the occasion far too often.

Cliftonville and Glentoran will be joined in next season's Europa League by Portadown, who were beaten 2-1 by Linfield in the Cup Final.

After 13 games, Lisburn Distillery were rock bottom with just one point. But after former Newcastle United

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
RORY PATTERSON
(Coleraine)
Returning unheralded after spells in England with Rochdale, FC United of Manchester and Bradford Park Avenue, he scored 30 league goals – including four in a 6-0 drubbing of champions Glentoran at the Oval. His feats earned him a call-up to the international side and a move to Plymouth Argyle.

COACH OF THE SEASON
DAVID JEFFREY
(Linfield)
After a barren campaign last time around, the Blues boss guided his side to a fourth double in five seasons.

Saints alive... TNS players in party mode

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On top... Linfield's Robert Garrett (in blue) and Kieran O'Connor of Cliftonville

keeper Tommy Wright replaced Jimmy Brown as coach, they began a remarkable surge. With two months to go they trailed second-bottom Institute by 12 points, but managed to finish eight points clear of the Derry team.

Misery was complete for manager John Gregg's side when they were beaten in the promotion-relegation play-off by West Belfast side Donegal Celtic, who scored the only goal in the second leg of the play-off in the 86th minute at Institute's ground.

Roy Kitson

SLOVENIA

Experience matters to first-time winners

HAVING been within minutes of being relegated last year, Koper achieved an amazing turnaround in fortune under the guidance of coach Nedzad Okcic to win their first national championship.

Koper became only the fifth club to lift the title in its 18-year history and owe much of their success to the form of midfielder Miran Pavlin, who chipped in with 11 goals in 30 games.

"There is no distinction on young and old players; there are only good and bad players," explained 38-year-old Pavlin, also the club's sporting director.

While Koper look forward to the early stages of the Champions League, Slovenia's most successful club Maribor must settle for the Europa League after beating Domzale 3-2 in the Cup Final. They will be joined by Gorica and Olimpija, back in the top flight for the first time since the original club was dissolved due to debt in 2005.

The biggest surprise of the season was the relegation of last season's Cup winners Interblock. Tipped to challenge for the title, they were demoted after losing 4-0 on aggregate in a promotion/relegation play-off to Triglav, who were runners-up in the second tier. Champions Primorje take the place of Drava.

Midfield maestro...Pavlin

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
MIRAN PAVLIN (Koper)
He may turn 39 in October, but the 63-times capped former Porto midfielder is still fit enough to lead a team – on and off the pitch.

COACH OF THE SEASON
NEDZAD OKCIC (Koper)
Joined the club in 2008 and will now lead *Kanarcki* (the Canaries) in their first-ever Champions League campaign.

WALES

TNS clinch the title

THE latest Welsh Premier League season has been one of the most momentous – both on and off the pitch – since the competition began in 1992.

Not only did the clubs contest the usual league championship and Europa League places, a total restructuring of the league for next season – with the championship being reduced from 18 to 12 clubs – meant that the relegation zone was widened to the bottom six.

In addition, every club had to obtain a domestic licence in order to participate next term.

The pressure was on from the start and when the licences were eventually awarded in early April only eight clubs were successful. Others, including promotion candidates Afan Lido and Llangefni Town, followed the next step to the Appeals Board.

In a shock announcement Rhyl, who finished sixth and who were champions the season before, were denied a licence on financial grounds. With both promotion candidates also failing, the 12-team line-up for next season will be: Aberystwyth Town, Airbus UK Broughton, Bala Town, Bangor City, Carmarthen Town, Haverfordwest County, Llanelli, Neath, Newtown, Port Talbot Town, Prestatyn Town and The New Saints.

On the field, the season was one of the tightest in the League's 17-season history. The horrendous winter weather, which renewed calls for summer football, caused a fixture backlog that affected many clubs – but none more so than Llanelli, who were forced to play eight matches in 20 days. They won six and drew two, but were pipped to the title by The New Saints – there were just two points in it – on the very last day of the season. Llanelli striker Rhys Griffiths won the Golden Boot for the fifth successive season, helped by a remarkable 10 goals in the last six matches.

TNS will enter next season's Champions League qualifiers, while Llanelli will have to settle for the Europa League, where they will be joined by Port Talbot Town, who reached the Welsh Cup Final for the first time only to lose 3-2 to a last-minute goal against Bangor City. It was City's third win in succession and they also take their place in the Europa League.

The New Saints also triumphed in the League Cup by beating Rhyl 3-1 in the Final.

Mel Thomas

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
CRAIG JONES
(The New Saints)
Won back-to-back championship medals, having joined TNS from Rhyl in May 2009.

COACH OF THE SEASON
MARK JONES
(Port Talbot Town)
Steered his club to the Welsh Cup Final and into Europe for the very first time.

CONCACAF Pachuca lead Mexican cruise

Final analysis...Pachuca's Javier Munoz (left) tussles with Cruz Azul's Javier Orozco

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

IN what is surely the most predictable competition in the world, two Mexican teams contested the Final, with Pachuca beating Cruz Azul thanks to a last-minute goal. However, the Aztec domination went much further than just the last two, with all four semi-final spots occupied by Mexico's entrants.

Unlike last year, when unknown teams such as Montreal Impact and Puerto Rico Islanders shocked the region with their good performances, this time the favourites cruised through the opening stages. The four groups were all topped by Mexican teams (who lost only three matches between them despite often fielding reserve players) and the only relative surprise came from the modest Panamanian side Arabe Unido.

The quarter-finals were also a walk in the park. Pumas massacred Honduran side Marathon 6-3 on aggregate despite conceding the silliest goal of the tournament when keeper Alejandro Palacios failed to control a back pass from Jehu Chiapas and the ball ended in his own net. Cruz Azul easily disposed of Arabe Unido 4-0, while Pachuca and Toluca struggled against Guatemala's Comunicaciones and USA's Columbus Crew but the outcomes were never in doubt.

The elimination of Columbus in the quarter-finals continued the disappointing trend for MLS teams in the tournament. With Chivas USA going out in the preliminary round and Houston Dynamo finishing third in an apparently easy group, it seems clear that, despite all its efforts, the US league is still in the regional background – on the same level as Honduras, Costa Rica and Guatemala, and way behind their powerful southern neighbours.

The real tournament began in the semi-finals. For the first time in the competition, Mexican teams used their strongest starting line-ups and the quality rose significantly. In the first tie, Cruz Azul continued their dominance over Mexico City rivals Pumas. After losing 1-0 in the first leg, they managed a 5-0 rout in the return to reach their second successive Final. There they would meet Pachuca, who defeated Toluca in a much tighter semi-final which was settled by the smallest of margins (a 1-1 draw and a 1-0 home win).

The contrast between the finalists could not have been clearer. While Pachuca have been used to glorious victories (four league titles, three CONCACAF Champions Cups and a Sudamericana Cup in the last 10 years), Cruz Azul arrived with an incredible streak of four consecutive defeats in Finals in the last two years in domestic and international arenas.

Yet after 179 minutes it seemed the story would change. Cruz Azul won 2-1 at their own Estadio Azul and were managing a brave 0-0 draw at Pachuca's Estadio Hidalgo. Then, just as the referee was about to blow the final whistle, Damian Alvarez darted through the heart of Cruz Azul's defence and set up Edgar Benitez who sent an unstoppable shot that ended in Jesus Corona's net, dashing the hopes of millions of fans who thought their curse was coming to an end.

> "Cruz Azul arrived with an incredible streak of four consecutive defeats in Finals in the last two years"

Pachuca thereby qualified for the Club World Cup for a third time and will aim to improve on their previous poor performances on the world stage.

Martin Del Palacio Langer

Winning feeling...Pachuca's Munoz with the trophy

Upsetting the odds...Hekari held their nerve to beat firm favourites Waitakere United

OCEANIA Hekari make history

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

HEKARI UNITED created the greatest upset in Oceania football history in beating overwhelming favourites Waitakere United 4-2 in the Final.

Prior to its deciding tie, the tournament had followed a highly familiar pattern. The preliminary phase's Group A saw previously dominant forces Waitakere United and Auckland City, who shared the four previous titles equally between them, produce their annual arm-wrestle, while seemingly nondescript island-outfits contested Group B.

The Queen City neighbours completed their section undefeated, drawing both the derbies and respective away games with New Caledonia's Magenta. Key fixture was Waitakere United's 5-1 demolition of Manu Ura at Papeete. City won 2-0 in Tahiti so were eliminated on goal difference.

Hekari's start provided absolutely no indication of what was to come, with a lone point being gathered from the opening two rounds, including a potentially fatal home loss to pace-setters Lautoka. Fiji's standard-bearers retained the inside running until the return, when they had two men sent off and lost 1-0.

Needing a win at bottom-placed Solomon Islands club Marist to advance, Hekari did so by an emphatic 4-1 scoreline.

Despite playing in 30 degree heat before a volatile 15,000 crowd and on a surface roughened by recent rugby league clashes, Waitakere United enjoyed as much possession as their hosts at Port Moresby in the first leg of the Final. They manufactured a similar number of scoring opportunities as well, hitting the woodwork three times.

Hekari's advantage lay with their potency in front of goal, yet their opener was gifted to them when the Kiwis' goalkeeper Danny Robinson failed to gather an over-hit pass from midfield on the edge of his area, allowing the alert Kemi Jack to collect the ball and walk it into the net.

Two further goals resulted from some magic from Alick Maemae. Shortly after half-time he produced an exquisitely struck 25-yard drive and, in the 73rd minute, he dribbled past several defenders before crossing for Jack to score his second.

Waitakere United were confident of overturning the three-goal deficit in the cool of west Auckland on their own immaculately flat Fred Taylor Park turf, and when player-coach Neil Emblen was left unmarked to head home from a corner after two minutes they appeared to be on their own way.

But Hekari remained composed and, surprisingly, had not come solely to defend. They maintained their usual 4-4-2 formation and began to look dangerous through frequent counter-attacks. And when Robinson clumsily brought down Maemae, Jack equalised from the penalty spot to restore the Papua New Guineans' overall three-goal cushion.

Waitakere did create several chances in the final hour, but their too little, too late reward came from a Brent Fisher penalty with six minutes remaining.

So, the Hekari squad, which includes six Solomon Islanders, a pair of Fijians and 10 players from the Papua New Guinea national team – which FIFA ranks as the world's worst – will represent Oceania at the Club World Cup.

The South Pacific's lesser lights have only once previously been represented in the finals of a FIFA competition and that was at the last Under-20 World Cup when Tahiti conceded 21 goals in their three matches. For the sake of Oceania's credibility, Hekari must fare better.

Paul Moon

> "Jack equalised from the penalty spot to restore the Papua New Guineans' overall three-goal cushion"

Top...Pyunik coach Minasyan

ANDORRA

Big two take top honours once more

FC Santa Coloma and Sant Julia continue to be the dominant forces in Andorran football, once again sharing the main prizes.

FC Santa Coloma deservedly won the league championship. They were unbeaten all season – in both the regular campaign and the play-offs – and will now enter the first qualifying round of the Champions League.

Andorran Cup winners Sant Julia will join UE Santa Coloma and Lusitans in the Europa League qualifiers.

ARMENIA

Pyunik march on

Vardan Minasyan's youthful Pyunik squad are three points clear at the top of the Premier League as they chase a 10th successive championship.

With several Armenia Under-21s players in their starting line-up, unbeaten Pyunik also won the Armenian Cup and coach Minasyan says: "We have a young team, but all the players have international as well as league experience.

"Pyunik always set high standards so we will try to defend our crown."

Opportunity...Adams

RESULTS

EUROPE

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Quarter-finals

1st legs

Mar 30
Bayern Munich (Ger) 2 (Ribery 76, Olic 90+2)
Manchester United (Eng) 1 (Rooney 2)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 66,000. **Ref:** De Bleeckere (Blg)
Bayern: Butt - Lahm, Van Buyten, Demichelis, Badstuber, Van Bommel, Pranjic (Tymoshchuk 89), Altintop (Klose 86), Ribery, Muller (Gomez 73), Olic.
Man Utd: Van der Sar - Neville, Ferdinand, Vidic, Evra, Fletcher, Carrick (Valencia 70), Scholes, Nani (Giggs 82), Park (Berbatov 70), Rooney.

Mar 30
Lyon (Fra) 3 (Lopez 10, pen 77, Michel Bastos 32)
Bordeaux (Fra) 1 (Chamakh 14)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 37,859. **Ref:** Brych (Ger)
Lyon: Lloris - Reveillere, Cris, Bodmer, Cissokho, Makoun, Toulalan, Delgado (Gonalons 86), Pjanic (Kallstrom 66), Michel Bastos (Govou 66), Lopez.
Bordeaux: Carrasso - Chalme (Henrique 82), Sane, Ciani, Tremoulinas, Plasil, Fernando, Gouffran (Bellion 84), Gourcuff, Wendel (Jussie 72), Chamakh.

Mar 31
Arsenal (Eng) 2 (Walcott 69, Fabregas pen 85)
Barcelona (Spa) 2 (Ibrahimovic 46, 59)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 59,572. **Ref:** Busacca (Swi)
Arsenal: Almunia - Sagna (Walcott 66), Gallas (Denilson 44), Vermaelen, Clichy, Fabregas, Song, Diaby, Nasri, Bendtner, Arshavin (Eboue 27).
Barcelona: Valdes - Daniel Alves, Pique, Puyol, Maxwell, Keita, Busquets, Xavi, Messi (Milito 87), Ibrahimovic (Henry 76), Pedro. *Sent off: Puyol 84min.*

Mar 31
Internazionale (Ita) 1 (Milito 65)
CSKA Moscow (Rus) 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 69,398. **Ref:** Webb (Eng)
Inter: Julio Cesar - Maicon, Materazzi, Samuel, Zanetti, Stankovic, Cambiasso, Eto'o, Sneijder, Pandev (Mariga 90+4), Milito.
CSKA: Akinfeev - V Berezutsky, A Berezutsky, Ignashevich, Schennikov, Aldonin (Rahimic 76), Semberas, Krasic, Honda (Dzagoev 70), Mamaev (Gonzalez 73), Necid.

2nd legs

Apr 6
Barcelona 4 (Messi 21, 37, 42, 88)
Arsenal 1 (Bendtner 18)
HT: 3-1. **Att:** 93,330. **Ref:** Stark (Ger)
Barcelona 6-3 on agg
Barcelona: Valdes - Daniel Alves, Marquez, Milito, Abidal (Maxwell 53), Xavi, Busquets, Keita, Messi, Pedro (Iniesta 86), Bojan (Toure 56).
Arsenal: Almunia - Sagna, Silvestre (Eboue 64), Vermaelen, Clichy, Denilson, Nasri, Diaby, Walcott, Rosicky (Eduardo 73), Bendtner.

Apr 6
CSKA Moscow 0
Internazionale 1 (Sneijder 6)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 56,000. **Ref:** Lannoy (Fra)
Internazionale 2-0 on agg
CSKA: Akinfeev - A Berezutsky, V Berezutsky (Odiah 14), Ignashevich, Schennikov, Semberas, Honda (Rahimic 77), Mamaev, Dzagoev, Gonzalez, Necid (Guilherme 71). *Sent off: Odiah 49min.*
Inter: Julio Cesar - Maicon, Lucio, Samuel, Zanetti, Stankovic, Sneijder (Muntari 86), Cambiasso, Pandev (Chivu 63), Milito (Balotelli 74), Eto'o.

Apr 7
Bordeaux 1 (Chamakh 45)
Lyon 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 31,962. **Ref:** Undiano Mallenco (Spa)
Lyon 3-2 on agg
Bordeaux: Carrasso - Sane, Ciani, Planus (Cavenaghi 85), Tremoulinas, Plasil, Diarra (Chalme 70), Jussie (Gouffran 79), Gourcuff, Wendel, Chamakh.
Lyon: Lloris - Reveillere, Cris, Boumsong (Bodmer 77), Cissokho, Toulalan, Gonalons, Delgado, Kallstrom, Michel Bastos (Ederson 88), Gomis (Pjanic 66).

Apr 7
Manchester United 3 (Gibson 3, Nani 7, 41)
Bayern Munich 2 (Olic 43, Robben 74)
HT: 3-1. **Att:** 74,482. **Ref:** Rizzoli (Ita)
Agg 4-4. Bayern on away goals
Man Utd: Van der Sar - Rafael, Ferdinand, Vidic, Evra, Fletcher, Carrick (Berbatov 80), Gibson (Giggs 81), Valencia, Rooney (O'Shea 55), Nani. *Sent off: Rafael 50min.*
Bayern: Butt - Lahm, Van Buyten, Demichelis, Badstuber, Van Bommel, Schweinsteiger, Robben (Altintop 76), Muller (Gomez 46), Ribery, Olic (Pranjic 84).

Semi-finals

1st legs

Apr 20
Internazionale 3 (Sneijder 30, Maicon 48, Milito 61)
Barcelona 1 (Pedro 19)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 80,018. **Ref:** Benquerenca (Por)
Inter: Julio Cesar - Maicon (Chivu 73), Lucio, Samuel, Zanetti, Cambiasso, Thiago Motta, Eto'o, Sneijder, Pandev (Stankovic 56), Milito (Balotelli 75).
Barcelona: Valdes - Daniel Alves, Pique, Puyol, Maxwell, Xavi, Busquets, Pedro, Messi, Keita, Ibrahimovic (Abidal 62).

Apr 21
Bayern Munich 1 (Robben 69)
Lyon 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 66,000. **Ref:** Rosetti (Ita)
Bayern: Butt - Lahm, Van Buyten, Demichelis, Contento, Schweinsteiger, Pranjic (Gomez 63), Robben (Altintop 85), Muller, Ribery, Olic (Tymoshchuk 46). *Sent off: Ribery 37min.*
Lyon: Lloris - Reveillere, Cris, Toulalan, Cissokho, Gonalons, Kallstrom, Ederson (Michel Bastos 70), Pjanic (Makoun 56), Delgado (Govou 79), Lopez. *Sent off: Toulalan 54min.*

2nd legs

Apr 27
Lyon 0
Bayern Munich 3 (Olic 26, 67, 78)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 39,414. **Ref:** Busacca (Swi)
Bayern 4-0 on agg
Lyon: Lloris - Reveillere, Cris, Boumsong, Cissokho (Gomis 46), Gonalons, Makoun, Michel Bastos, Delgado (Pjanic 67), Govou, Lopez (Ederson 79). *Sent off: Cris 59min.*
Bayern: Butt - Lahm, Van Buyten (Demichelis 46), Badstuber, Contento, Van Bommel, Schweinsteiger (Alaba 78), Altintop, Robben (Klose 76), Muller, Olic.

Apr 28
Barcelona 1 (Pique 84)
Internazionale 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 96,214. **Ref:** De Bleeckere (Blg)
Internazionale 3-2 on agg
Barcelona: Valdes - Daniel Alves, Pique, Milito (Maxwell 46), Keita, Toure, Xavi, Busquets (Jeffren 63), Messi, Pedro, Ibrahimovic (Bojan 63).
Inter: Julio Cesar - Maicon, Lucio, Samuel, Zanetti, Cambiasso, Thiago Motta, Eto'o (Mariga 86), Sneijder (Muntari 67), Chivu, Milito (Cordoba 81). *Sent off: Thiago Motta 28min.*

Final

May 22 - Santiago Bernabeu, Madrid
Bayern Munich 0
Internazionale 2 (Milito 35, 70)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 74,954. **Ref:** Webb (Eng)
Bayern: Butt - Lahm, Van Buyten, Demichelis, Badstuber, Van Bommel, Schweinsteiger, Robben, Altintop (Klose 63), Muller, Olic (Gomez 74).
Inter: Julio Cesar - Maicon, Lucio, Samuel, Chivu (Stankovic 68), Zanetti, Cambiasso, Sneijder, Eto'o, Pandev (Muntari 79), Milito (Materazzi 90+2).

EUROPA LEAGUE

Quarter-finals

1st legs - April 1; 2nd legs - April 8
Benfica (Por) v Liverpool (Eng)
2-1, 1-4 (agg 3-5)
Fulham (Eng) v Wolfsburg (Ger)
2-1, 1-0 (agg 3-1)
Hamburg (Ger) v Standard Liege (Blg)
2-1, 3-1 (agg 5-2)
Valencia (Spa) v Atletico Madrid (Spa)
2-2, 0-0 (agg 2-2; Atletico on away goals)

Semi-finals

1st legs - April 22; 2nd legs - April 29
Atletico Madrid v Liverpool
1-0, 1-2 (agg 2-2; Atletico on away goals)
Hamburg v Fulham
0-0, 1-2 (agg 1-2)

Final

May 12 - Hamburg Arena
Atletico Madrid 2 (Forlan 32, 116)
Fulham 1 (Davies 37)
Aet. **HT:** 1-1. **90mins:** 1-1. **Att:** 49,000.
Ref: Rizzoli (Ita)
Atletico: De Gea - Ujfalusi, Perea, Alvaro Dominguez, Antonio Lopez, Paulo Assuncao, Raul Garcia, Reyes (Salvio 78), Simao (Jurado 68), Forlan, Aguero (Valera 119).
Fulham: Schwarzer - Baird, Hughes, Hangeland, Konchesky, Duff (Nevland 84), Etuhu, Murphy (Greening 118), Davies, Gera, Zamora (Dempsey 55).

ALBANIA

ALBANIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo	33	19	4	10	56	42	61
Besa	33	15	8	10	42	33	53
KF Tirana	33	15	7	11	38	32	52
Laci	33	14	9	10	35	28	51
Flamurtari	33	13	8	12	42	39	47
Vllaznia	33	13	7	13	34	39	46
Shkumbini	33	13	6	14	33	33	45
Teuta	33	13	6	14	33	40	45
Kastrioti*	33	13	6	14	33	35	42
Skenderbeu	33	11	9	13	41	41	42
Apolonia (R)	33	10	8	15	36	43	38
Gramozi (R)	33	6	8	19	25	43	26

**3pts deducted after Kastrioti players walked off the pitch in protest at a refereeing decision during the game at Flamurtari*

Promoted: *Bylis Ballshi, Elbasani*

ALBANIAN CUP

Final

May 9 - Qemal Stafa stadium, Tirana
Besa 2 (Kraja og 85, Dhembi 98)
Vllaznia 1 (Bala 63)
Aet. **HT:** 0-0. **90mins:** 1-1. **Ref:** Ceferin (Sln)

ANDORRA

Teams carried forward full record from the 14-round regular season

ANDORRA – CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Sta Coloma	20	13	7	0	46	14	46
UE Sta Coloma	20	13	4	3	50	26	43
Sant Julia	20	12	5	3	69	18	41
Lusitans	20	7	3	10	34	32	24

ANDORRA – RELEGATION GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Principat	20	8	2	10	42	50	26
Inter	20	6	1	13	25	49	19
Encamp	20	4	3	13	31	67	15
Engordany (R)	20	4	1	15	22	63	13

Promoted: *Casa del Benfica*

ANDORRAN CUP

Final

May 15 - Camp d'Esports, Aixovall
Sant Julia 1 (Gomez 82)
UE Santa Coloma 0
HT: 0-0

ARMENIA

ARMENIAN CUP

Final

May 10 - Hanrapetakan stadium, Yerevan
Pyunik 4 (Manoyan 14, Pizzelli 41, Ghazaryan 45, 70)
Banants 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 8,000. **Ref:** Tshagharyan

AUSTRIA

Apr 2: Salzburg 2 Mattersburg 0.
Apr 3: Rapid 1 Austria Karnten 0; Sturm 1 Kapfenberger 1; Ried 2 LASK 2.
Apr 4: Wiener Neustadt 0 Austria Wien 1.
Apr 9: Ried 1 Rapid 3.
Apr 10: Austria Karnten 0 Salzburg 2; LASK 1 Wiener Neustadt 1; Mattersburg 3 Kapfenberger 1.
Apr 11: Austria Wien 1 Sturm 0.

AZERBAIJAN

Inter take title

A hat-trick from Robertas Poskus saw Inter beat Qabala 4-1 and steal the league title after leaders Xazar Lankaran lost 1-0 at home to FK Baku on the last day of the season.

FK Baku also beat Xazar 2-1 in the Azerbaijan Cup Final.

Inter will enter next season's Champions League second qualifying round, while FK Baku go into the Europa League with Qarabag.

Qabala, who finished sixth, will be coached by Tony Adams next term. The ex-England and Arsenal defender will be assisted by former Tottenham Hotspur player Gary Stevens.

BELARUS

BATE cup success

BATE Borisov beat Torpedo Zhodino 5-0 to win their first Belarusian Cup for four years. With BATE already heading for the Champions League, Torpedo will go into next season's Europa League.

BATE remain unbeaten in the league so far this term and lead second-place Belshina by two points.

At the bottom of the table, Partizan Minsk have scored just three goals in their 11 games so far, collecting a solitary point.

Going strong...BATE's Dmitry Likhtarovich (no2) celebrates

Apr 13: Rapid 0 LASK 0.
Apr 14: Salzburg 2 Ried 0; Wiener Neustadt 2 Mattersburg 1; Sturm 3 Austria Karnten 2; Kapfenberger 1 Austria Wien 1.
Apr 17: Ried 2 Kapfenberger 1; Mattersburg 0 Sturm 0; Rapid 3 Wiener Neustadt 0; Austria Karnten 0 Austria Wien 2.
Apr 18: LASK 0 Salzburg 0.
Apr 23: Salzburg 1 Rapid 1.
Apr 24: Wiener Neustadt 2 Ried 0; Sturm 0 LASK 1; Kapfenberger 0 Austria Karnten 0.
Apr 25: Austria Wien 5 Mattersburg 1.
Apr 30: Rapid 5 Kapfenberger 3.
May 1: Ried 1 Sturm 2; Mattersburg 1 Austria Karnten 1; Salzburg 4 Wiener Neustadt 2.
May 2: LASK 0 Austria Wien 1.
May 4: Kapfenberger 2 Salzburg 0.
May 5: Mattersburg 3 Ried 1; Sturm 1 Wiener Neustadt 0; Austria Wien 1 Rapid 0; Austria Karnten 2 LASK 2.
May 9: Salzburg 0 Austria Wien 1; Ried 3 Austria Karnten 1; Wiener Neustadt 3 Kapfenberger 1; LASK 2 Mattersburg 0; Rapid 4 Sturm 1.
May 13: Mattersburg 1 Rapid 3; Sturm 0 Salzburg 2; Kapfenberger 2 LASK 0; Austria Wien 2 Ried 0; Austria Karnten 2 Wiener Neustadt 2.

AUSTRIA – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Salzburg	36	22	10	4	68	27	76
Austria Wien	36	23	6	7	60	34	75
Rapid	36	21	10	5	80	38	73
Sturm	36	16	10	10	50	36	58
W Neustadt	36	13	8	15	54	58	47
Mattersburg	36	12	5	19	45	71	41
LASK	36	9	13	14	59	70	40
Ried	36	10	8	18	39	47	38
Kapfenberger	36	8	9	19	44	67	33
A Karnten (R)	36	2	9	25	29	80	15

Promoted: *Wacker Innsbruck*

AUSTRIAN CUP

Final

May 16 - Worthersee stadium, Klagenfurt
Sturm 1 (Lavric 81)
Wiener Neustadt 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 28,000. **Ref:** Grobelnik

AZERBAIJAN

AZERBAIJAN – CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Inter	20	7	8	5	22	19	29
FK Baku	20	7	7	6	19	15	28
Qarabag	20	6	9	5	16	18	27
Xazar	20	6	9	5	19	14	27
Neftci	20	4	11	5	11	12	23
Qabala	20	4	8	8	18	27	20

Teams carried forward results record (including points) from regular season games against championship group rivals

AZERBAIJAN – RELEGATION GROUP – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olimpik-Suv'n	20	10	6	4	27	15	36
Simurq	20	8	7	5	21	21	31
Turan	20	7	8	5	27	22	29
Mugan	20	7	6	7	17	16	27
Standard (R)	20	7	4	9	26	23	25
Karvan (R)	20	2	7	11	14	35	13

Teams carried forward results record (including points) from regular season games against relegation group rivals

Promoted: *Ganca, MOIK*

AZERI CUP

Final

May 23 - Tofik Bakhramov stadium, Baku
FK Baku 2 (Skulic 100, Solic 104)
Xazar 1 (Beqiri 120)
Aet. **HT:** 0-0. **90mins:** 0-0. **Att:** 26,000.
Ref: Mammadov

BELARUS

BELARUSIAN CUP

Final

May 23 - Dinamo stadium, Minsk
BATE Borisov 5 (Renan Bressan 5, 64, Rodionov 22, 69, Kontsevoi pen 57)
Torpedo Zhodino 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 10,200
Sent off: Beganski (Torpedo) 45min

BELGIUM

Championship group

(*Top six from the regular season*)
Mar 31: Zulte Waregem 1 St Truiden 2; Gent 1 Anderlecht 3; Club Brugge 3 Kortrijk 0.
Apr 3: Anderlecht 2 Club Brugge 2.
Apr 5: Kortrijk 1 St Truiden 2; Zulte Waregem 1 Gent 2.
Apr 9: St Truiden 1 Anderlecht 1.
Apr 10: Kortrijk 2 Zulte Waregem 0.
Apr 11: Club Brugge 1 Gent 1.
Apr 14: Anderlecht 1 Kortrijk 0; Gent 0 St Truiden 0; Zulte Waregem 2 Club Brugge 0.
Apr 17: St Truiden 1 Kortrijk 0.
Apr 18: Club Brugge 1 Anderlecht 2; Gent 5 Zulte Waregem 0.
Apr 23: Kortrijk 2 Club Brugge 0.
Apr 24: St Truiden 1 Zulte Waregem 2.
Apr 25: Anderlecht 4 Gent 2.
Apr 30: Zulte Waregem 0 Anderlecht 0.
May 1: Gent 0 Kortrijk 0.
May 2: Club Brugge 2 St Truiden 0.
May 5: Club Brugge 3 Zulte Waregem 0; Kortrijk 1 Anderlecht 3; St Truiden 1 Gent 1.
May 8: Anderlecht 2 St Truiden 1; Gent 6 Club Brugge 2; Zulte Waregem 1 Kortrijk 2.

BELGIUM – CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Anderlecht	10	7	3	0	24	9	59
Gent	10	4	4	2	20	13	41
Club Brugge	10	3	3	4	14	15	41
St Truiden	10	3	4	3	9	10	34
Kortrijk	10	3	1	6	9	13	33
Z Waregem	10	2	1	7	7	23	28

Teams carried forward half their points total (rounded up) from the regular season

Genk won the play-offs for the teams placed 7th to 14th in the regular season and then beat St Truiden (4th in the championship group) to earn a place in next season's Europa League

Roeselare, the 15th-placed team in the regular season table, were relegated after failing to take top spot in the four-team relegation/promotion play-offs; Mouscron were expelled from the league because of financial problems – all results expunged

Promoted: *Lierse, Eupen*

BELGIAN CUP

Final

May 15 - King Baudouin stadium, Brussels
Cercle Brugge 0
Gent 3 (Coulibaly 34, Leye 85, Grondin 90)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Allaerts

ESM Team of the Month

European Sports Magazines — MAY 2010

HOW IT WORKS

Every month, journalists from each member of the European Sports Magazines group vote for their first XI from Europe's top leagues. The players with the most votes make the overall team. For details of how ESM members voted this month, visit: **worldsoccer.com/esm11**

Bulgaria's best...Popov (right)

BULGARIA

Recognition for the champions

Lovech captain Ivelin Popov was voted the league's player of the season by his fellow professionals after leading his club to the title.

The 22-year-old topped the poll ahead of last season's winner, Lokomotiv Sofia striker Martin Kamburov, and Lovech's Brazilian winger Doka Madureira.

Lovech's 35-year-old midfielder Radostin Kishishev was also honoured with an award given in recognition of his contribution to the game in Bulgaria.

CYPRUS

APOEL miss out twice

Omonia beat title-holders and fierce rivals APOEL 1-0 to clinch their 20th Cypriot championship and will now enter the second qualifying round of next season's UEFA Champions League.

APOEL also lost out on silverware in the Cypriot Cup, going down 2-1 to Apollon in the Final.

Apollon's Argentinian striker Gaston Sangoy, who has scored more than 50 goals in his three seasons in Cypriot football, was named player of the season by the

Title winner...Omonia's Noel Kaseke (right)

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zeljeznicar	30	18	7	5	52	22	61
Siroki Brijeg	30	16	7	7	46	27	55
Borac	30	17	2	11	37	29	53
Zrinjski	30	15	6	9	46	33	51
Sarajevo	30	14	8	8	43	25	50
Olimpik	30	12	8	10	30	34	44
Velez	30	13	4	13	42	33	43
Sloboda	30	13	3	14	30	34	42
Travnik	30	11	6	13	40	41	39
Rudar	30	11	5	14	27	32	38
Leotar	30	11	5	14	32	48	38
Zvijezda	30	11	4	15	35	47	37
Celik	30	10	5	15	33	37	35
Slavija	30	10	5	15	32	46	35
Laktasi (R)	30	10	4	16	38	46	34
Modrica (R)	30	7	3	20	28	57	24

Promoted: *Buducnost Banovici, Drina Zvornik*

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA CUP

Final, 1st leg

May 5
Borac 1 (Vukelja 11)
Zeljeznicar 1 (Visca 83)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 11,000. **Ref:** Jakupovic

Final, 2nd leg

May 19
Zeljeznicar 2 (Visca 49, Beslija 55)
Borac 2 (Stevanovic 6, Kajkut 26)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 14,000. **Ref:** Skakic
Agg 3-3. Borac on away goals

BULGARIA

Apr 2: Lokomotiv Plovdiv 2 Pirin 0.
Apr 3: Lokomotiv Sofia 2 Sliven 0; Chernomorets 1 Levski 1.
Apr 4: Cherno More 3 Sportist 0; Slavia 3 Botev 0 (awarded); CSKA 1 Montana 1; Beroe 1 Lokomotiv Mezdra 0.
Apr 5: Lovech 1 Minyor 0.
Apr 9: Minyor 0 Slavia 1.
Apr 10: Montana 2 Chernomorets 0; Sliven 2 CSKA 4; Pirin 2 Beroe 2; Levski 2 Lokomotiv Plovdiv 0.
Apr 11: Lokomotiv Mezdra 2 Sportist 1; Lovech 4 Cherno More 0.
Apr 12: Botev 0 Lokomotiv Sofia 3 (awarded).
Apr 13: Lokomotiv Sofia 1 Minyor 1; Chernomorets 2 Sliven 0.
Apr 14: Slavia 1 Lovech 1; Cherno More 2 Lokomotiv Mezdra 0; Sportist 1 Pirin 1; Beroe 1 Levski 3.
Apr 15: Lokomotiv Plovdiv 2 Montana 4; CSKA 3 Botev 0 (awarded).
Apr 17: Slavia 1 Cherno More 0; Pirin 3 Lokomotiv Mezdra 1; Levski 5 Sportist 0.
Apr 18: Minyor 0 CSKA 0; Botev 0 Chernomorets 3 (awarded); Montana 2 Beroe 1; Lovech 2 Lokomotiv Sofia 0.
Apr 19: Sliven 1 Lokomotiv Plovdiv 1.
Apr 20: Lokomotiv Mezdra 1 Levski 1.
Apr 21: Cherno More 1 Pirin 1; Lokomotiv Sofia 0 Slavia 0; Sportist 0 Montana 1; CSKA 1 Lovech 0.
Apr 22: Beroe 0 Sliven 1; Lokomotiv Plovdiv 3 Botev 0 (awarded); Chernomorets 3 Minyor 1.
Apr 24: Slavia 1 CSKA 3; Levski 2 Pirin 0.
Apr 25: Lokomotiv Sofia 1 Cherno More 2; Sliven 1 Sportist 0; Lovech 2 Chernomorets 0.
Apr 26: Montana 1 Lokomotiv Mezdra 1; Botev 0 Beroe 3 (awarded); Minyor 0 Lokomotiv Plovdiv 0.
May 2: Beroe 0 Minyor 3; Lokomotiv Plovdiv 0 Lovech 3; Chernomorets 2 Slavia 2; Cherno More 1 Levski 1; Lokomotiv Mezdra 1 Sliven 1; Sportist 3 Botev 0 (awarded); CSKA 5 Lokomotiv Sofia 1; Pirin 2 Montana 0.
May 9: CSKA 2 Cherno More 2; Lokomotiv Sofia 0 Chernomorets 1; Slavia 1 Lokomotiv Plovdiv 3; Lovech 3 Beroe 0; Minyor 1 Sportist 2; Botev 0 Lokomotiv Mezdra 3 (awarded); Sliven 4 Pirin 0; Montana 0 Levski 2.
May 16: Cherno More 2 Montana 1; Levski 2 Sliven 0; Pirin 3 Botev 0 (awarded); Lokomotiv Mezdra 0 Minyor 1; Sportist 2 Lovech 4; Beroe 0 Slavia 1; Lokomotiv Plovdiv 2 Lokomotiv Sofia 1; Chernomorets 2 CSKA 0.

BULGARIA – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lovech	30	22	4	4	59	17	70
CSKA	30	16	10	4	51	25	58
Levski	30	17	6	7	57	26	57
Lok Sofia	30	15	7	8	47	33	52
Chernomorets	30	15	6	9	44	29	51
Slavia	30	14	8	8	34	28	50
Cherno More	30	13	9	8	40	28	48
Minyor	30	13	6	11	38	26	45
Pirin	30	11	10	9	34	32	43
Beroe	30	10	8	12	30	36	38
Montana	30	9	9	12	30	37	36
Lok Plovdiv	30	9	6	15	36	52	33
Sliven	30	9	5	16	29	40	32
Lok Mezdra (R)	30	7	6	17	30	48	27
Sportist (R)	30	5	4	21	23	59	19
Botev* (R)	30	1	4	25	12	78	7

**Botev expelled from league because of financial problems; all games after their expulsion were awarded as 3-0 wins to their opponents*

Promoted: *Vidima Rakovski, Kaliakra, Akademik*

BULGARIAN CUP

Final

May 5 - Gradski stadium, Lovech
Beroe 1 (D Atanasov 90+2)
Chernomorets Pomorie 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 5,250. **Ref:** Yordanov

CROATIA

Apr 2: Inter 2 Medimurje 1; Zagreb 1 Hajduk 1.
Apr 3: Zadar 2 Osijek 1; Slaven 4 Sesvete 0; Lokomotiva 0 Karlovac 0; Varteks 5 Sibenik 1; Cibalia 0 Istra 0; Rijeka 2 Dinamo 2.
Apr 10: Istra 2 Zadar 0; Sibenik 3 Zagreb 1; Karlovac 1 Varteks 1; Dinamo 1 Lokomotiva 0; Medimurje 1 Rijeka 5; Sesvete 3 Inter 1; Osijek 0 Slaven 1; Hajduk 2 Cibalia 1.
Apr 14: Hajduk 1 Istra 0; Cibalia 4 Sibenik 3; Zagreb 4 Karlovac 2; Lokomotiva 1 Medimurje 3; Rijeka 4 Sesvete 2; Inter 0 Osijek 3; Slaven 2 Zadar 1; Varteks 1 Dinamo 2.
Apr 17: Istra 2 Slaven 0; Zadar 0 Inter 1; Osijek 1 Rijeka 0; Sesvete 1 Lokomotiva 2; Medimurje 0 Varteks 0; Dinamo 1 Zagreb 1; Karlovac 3 Cibalia 0; Sibenik 0 Hajduk 1.
Apr 23: Zagreb 2 Medimurje 1; Inter 2 Slaven 0.
Apr 24: Sibenik 1 Istra 1; Hajduk 1 Karlovac 0; Varteks 4 Sesvete 1; Lokomotiva 2 Osijek 2; Rijeka 3 Zadar 2; Cibalia 2 Dinamo 0.
Apr 30: Sesvete 1 Zagreb 4.
May 1: Istra 2 Inter 0; Slaven 1 Rijeka 1; Zadar 1 Lokomotiva 1; Osijek 1 Varteks 1; Medimurje 0 Cibalia 2; Karlovac 0 Sibenik 2; Dinamo 0 Hajduk 0.
May 8: Karlovac 1 Istra 1; Zagreb 1 Osijek 0; Sibenik 2 Dinamo 1; Hajduk 4 Medimurje 1; Cibalia 5 Sesvete 0; Varteks 1 Zadar 0; Lokomotiva 1 Slaven 1; Rijeka 3 Inter 1.
May 13: Istra 2 Rijeka 0; Inter 4 Lokomotiva 2; Slaven 2 Varteks 3; Zadar 1 Zagreb 0; Osijek 2 Cibalia 0; Sesvete 2 Hajduk 5; Medimurje 4 Sibenik 0; Dinamo 1 Karlovac 1.

CROATIA – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo	30	18	8	4	70	20	62
Hajduk	30	17	7	6	50	21	58
Cibalia	30	16	9	5	46	20	57
Sibenik	30	14	8	8	34	37	50
Karlovac	30	12	11	7	32	23	47
Osijek	30	13	8	9	49	36	47
Slaven	30	11	10	9	44	45	43
Lokomotiva	30	12	6	12	35	38	42
Rijeka	30	10	10	10	49	44	40
Varteks	30	9	9	12	36	43	36
Istra	30	9	8	13	31	40	35
Zadar	30	9	7	14	27	41	34
Inter	30	10	3	17	36	50	33
Zagreb	30	9	6	15	43	49	33
Medimurje (R)	30	8	5	17	37	61	29
Sesvete (R)	30	3	5	22	30	81	14

Promoted: *Radnicki Split, Hrvatski Dragovoljac*

CROATIAN CUP

Final, 1st leg

Apr 21
Hajduk 2 (Ticinovic 61, Ibricic 88)
Sibenik 1 (Zec pen 65)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Kovacic

Final, 2nd leg

May 5
Sibenik 0
Hajduk 2 (Vukusic 16, Ibricic pen 90+3)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 5,500. **Ref:** Vuckov
Hajduk 4-1 on agg

CYPRUS

Teams carried forward full record from the 26-round regular season

Championship group

Mar 28: APOEL 0 Omonia 1; Anorthosis 2 Apollon 0.
Apr 11: Apollon 1 APOEL 2; Omonia 1 Anorthosis 1.
Apr 18: Anorthosis 1 APOEL 1; Apollon 0 Omonia 0.
Apr 24: APOEL 1 Anorthosis 0.
Apr 25: Omonia 1 Apollon 1.
May 2: Omonia 1 APOEL 0; Apollon 0 Anorthosis 0.
May 8: APOEL 3 Apollon 2; Anorthosis 2 Omonia 4.

CYPRUS – CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Omonia	32	22	8	2	60	25	74
APOEL	32	19	8	5	53	24	65
Anorthosis	32	19	7	6	51	27	64
Apollon	32	17	9	6	47	23	60

CYPRUS – MIDDLE GROUP – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
AEL	32	18	4	10	50	33	58
ENP	32	10	10	12	40	42	40
Ethnikos	32	10	8	14	34	42	38
APOP	32	11	4	17	50	65	37

CYPRUS – RELEGATION GROUP* – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ermis	32	12	8	12	43	38	44
AEP	32	9	9	14	39	50	36
Doxa	32	9	8	15	36	46	35
Aris (R)	32	4	9	19	30	63	21

**Nea Salamina and APEP were relegated after finishing in the bottom two places in the regular season, so did not take part in the play-off stage*

Promoted: *Alki, AEK, Olympiakos*

CYPRIOT CUP

Final

May 15 - Larnaca
APOEL 1 (Zewlakow 23)
Apollon 2 (Bangura 1, Merkis 72)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 12,000. **Ref:** Rosetti (Ita)

CZECH REPUBLIC

Apr 3: Jablonec 3 Olomouc 1; Brno 2 Mlada Boleslav 3; Slovacko 0 Liberec 0.
Apr 4: Ceske Budejovice 2 Pribram 1; Bohemians 1 Kladno 4.
Apr 5: Teplice 0 Ostrava 1; Slavia 3 Bohemians 1905 0; Plzen 2 Sparta 2.
Apr 10: Bohemians 1905 3 Bohemians 0 (awarded); Ostrava 3 Slovacko 2.
Apr 11: Mlada Boleslav 1 Jablonec 2; Olomouc 1 Plzen 0; Kladno 2 Ceske Budejovice 1; Pribram 3 Brno 1; Liberec 1 Teplice 0.
Apr 12: Sparta 1 Slavia 0.
Apr 14: Pribram 2 Mlada Boleslav 2.
Apr 17: Plzen 1 Jablonec 1; Slovacko 1 Bohemians 1905 1; Brno 1 Olomouc 2.
Apr 18: Bohemians 2 Mlada Boleslav 4; Ceske Budejovice 0 Sparta 0; Slavia 0 Kladno 0; Teplice 1 Pribram 0.
Apr 19: Liberec 0 Ostrava 1.
Apr 24: Pribram 1 Liberec 1; Sparta 1 Bohemians 0; Plzen 0 Ceske Budejovice 0; Jablonec 1 Brno 0.
Apr 25: Kladno 1 Slovacko 0; Mlada Boleslav 0 Teplice 1; Olomouc 3 Slavia 1.
Apr 26: Bohemians 1905 0 Ostrava 1.
Apr 30: Slovacko 1 Mlada Boleslav 0.
May 1: Liberec 1 Bohemians 1905 1; Brno 2 Plzen 2; Teplice 5 Kladno 0.
May 2: Bohemians 0 Jablonec 4; Ceske Budejovice 2 Olomouc 1; Slavia 3 Pribram 0; Ostrava 1 Sparta 1.
May 5: Pribram 2 Bohemians 1905 0; Kladno 0 Ostrava 3; Sparta 4 Slovacko 0; Mlada Boleslav 0 Ceske Budejovice 1; Olomouc 2 Liberec 0; Plzen 4 Slavia 2; Brno 0 Bohemians 0; Jablonec 0 Teplice 0.
May 8: Bohemians 2 Plzen 2; Ceske Budejovice 1 Brno 3; Slavia 0 Jablonec 3; Teplice 1 Olomouc 1; Slovacko 2 Pribram 1; Liberec 2 Sparta 2; Ostrava 2 Mlada Boleslav 2; Bohemians 1905 0 Kladno 0.
May 15: Pribram 1 Ostrava 1; Kladno 1 Liberec 2; Sparta 1 Teplice 0; Mlada Boleslav 0 Slavia 1; Olomouc 3 Bohemians 0; Jablonec 2 Ceske Budejovice 0; Plzen 2 Slovacko 2; Brno 1 Bohemians 1905 2.

CZECH REPUBLIC – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sparta	30	16	14	0	42	14	62
Jablonec	30	18	7	5	42	24	61
Ostrava	30	17	9	4	47	25	60
Teplice	30	15	10	5	44	25	55
Plzen	30	12	12	6	42	33	48
Olomouc	30	14	5	11	49	36	47
Slavia	30	11	8	11	37	35	41
M Boleslav	30	11	6	13	47	41	39
Liberec	30	10	7	13	34	39	37
Pribram	30	10	6	14	35	41	36
Brno	30	9	8	13	31	40	35
Boh'ians 1905	30	8	10	12	21	29	34
C Budejovice	30	7	10	13	24	35	31
Slovacko	30	8	6	16	28	42	30
Kladno (R)	30	7	4	19	24	50	25
Bohemians* (R)	30	4	4	22	27	65	-4

**20pts deducted for refusing to play Bohemians 1905 (because Bohemians claimed 1905 were not proper members of the federation) and for accusing Olomouc of attempted bribery without presenting any evidence*

Promoted: *Hradec Kralove, Usti nad Labem*

league's coaches and earned himself a summer move to Sporting Gijon of Spain.

Anorthosis, who will enter the first qualifying round of the Europa League, have replaced Nikos Nicolaou with Argentinian coach Guillermo Angel Hoyos.

CZECH REPUBLIC

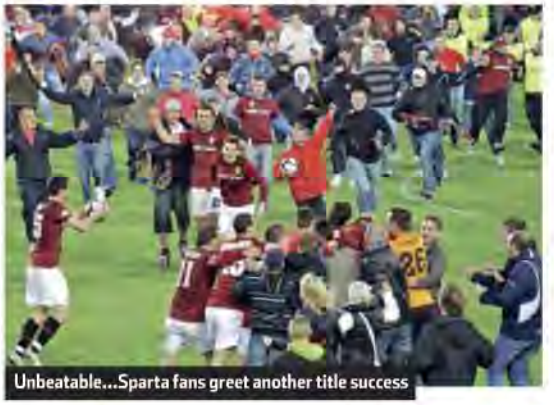
Record run for Sparta

Champions Sparta went through the league season unbeaten, stretching their record run to 33 league games without defeat.

The last time the team from Prague lost a league game was in May 2009 against Tescoma Zlin – who were relegated that season.

Meanwhile, Chelsea's Petr Cech was voted Czech player of the year for 2009 ahead of Galatasaray's Milan Baros and Jaroslav Plasil of Bordeaux.

1 major trophies Cesc Fabregas has won at Arsenal during his seven seasons in English football



Unbeatable...Sparta fans greet another title success

CZECH CUP

Final

May 18 - Generali Arena, Prague
Jablonec 1 (Lafata 60)
Plzen 2 (Petrzela 2, Bystron 68)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 8,233. **Ref:** Jilek

DENMARK

Mar 31: Esbjerg 0 AGF 4.
Apr 1: Midtjylland 1 Nordsjaelland 0; HB Koge 1 Randers 2; Brondby 2 Silkeborg 2; Copenhagen 2 OB 0.
Apr 2: AaB 1 SonderjyskE 1.
Apr 4: AGF 0 Randers 0; HB Koge 1 Brondby 2.
Apr 5: Silkeborg 1 AaB 1; Nordsjaelland 0 Copenhagen 3; SonderjyskE 0 Midtjylland 2; OB 0 Esbjerg 0.
Apr 10: AGF 0 AaB 2.
Apr 11: SonderjyskE 4 Silkeborg 0; Randers 1 Copenhagen 0; Esbjerg 2 Midtjylland 1; OB 0 Brondby 1.
Apr 12: Nordsjaelland 1 HB Koge 1.
Apr 14: Midtjylland 1 AGF 0; AaB 1 OB 0; Silkeborg 1 Randers 3; Copenhagen 3 Esbjerg 2.
Apr 15: HB Koge 1 SonderjyskE 2; Brondby 0 Nordsjaelland 1.
Apr 17: Midtjylland 3 Copenhagen 2.
Apr 18: Silkeborg 1 Nordsjaelland 4; Brondby 1 AGF 0; SonderjyskE 0 Randers 1; HB Koge 1 OB 2.
Apr 19: AaB 0 Esbjerg 0.
Apr 24: OB 1 Silkeborg 0.
Apr 25: AGF 0 HB Koge 3; Copenhagen 2 AaB 0; Nordsjaelland 3 SonderjyskE 1; Esbjerg 1 Brondby 1.
Apr 26: Randers 2 Midtjylland 0.
May 1: Silkeborg 1 AGF 4.
May 2: Nordsjaelland 1 Randers 1; HB Koge 1 Esbjerg 2; AaB 3 Midtjylland 2; Brondby 0 Copenhagen 2.
May 3: SonderjyskE 2 OB 0.
May 5: Midtjylland 2 Brondby 4; Randers 3 AaB 1; Copenhagen 4 HB Koge 0.
May 6: Esbjerg 4 Silkeborg 0; AGF 1 SonderjyskE 2; OB 2 Nordsjaelland 1.
May 9: Nordsjaelland 0 AGF 1; Brondby 2 AaB 0; OB 1 Randers 3; SonderjyskE 1 Esbjerg 0; HB Koge 1 Midtjylland 0; Silkeborg 2 Copenhagen 0.
May 16: Randers 1 Brondby 3; Midtjylland 3 Silkeborg 0; AaB 0 HB Koge 0; AGF 0 OB 3; Copenhagen 3 SonderjyskE 1; Esbjerg 3 Nordsjaelland 3.

DENMARK – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Copenhagen	33	21	5	7	61	22	68
OB	33	17	8	8	46	34	59
Brondby	33	15	7	11	57	50	52
Esbjerg	33	13	11	9	48	43	50
AaB	33	13	9	11	36	30	48
Midtjylland	33	14	5	14	45	48	47
Nordsjaelland	33	12	7	14	40	41	43
Silkeborg	33	12	7	14	47	51	43
SonderjyskE	33	11	8	14	32	37	41
Randers	33	10	10	13	37	43	40
AGF (R)	33	10	8	15	36	47	38
HB Koge (R)	33	4	7	22	30	69	19

Promoted: *Horsens (plus one other – 2nd level fixtures not completed by press time)*

DANISH CUP

Final

May 13 - Parken, Copenhagen
Nordsjaelland 2 (Stokholm 97, Fetai 106)
Midtjylland 0
Aet. **HT:** 0-0. **90mins:** 0-0. **Att:** 18,856.
Ref: Vollquartz

ENGLAND

Saturday, April 3

Arsenal 1 (Bendtner 90)
Wolverhampton 0 Att: 60,067

Bolton 0
Aston Villa 1 (A Young 11) Att: 21,111

Burnley 1 (S Fletcher 71)
Manchester City 6 (Adebayor 4, 45, Bellamy 5, Tevez 7, Vieira 20, Kompany 58) Att: 21,330

Manchester United 1 (Macheda 81)
Chelsea 2 (J Cole 20, Drogba 79) Att: 75,217

Portsmouth 0
Blackburn 0 Att: 16,207

Stoke 2 (Fuller 6, Lawrence 90)
Hull 0 Att: 27,604

Sunderland 3 (Bent 1, pen 29, Zenden 86)
Tottenham 1 (Crouch 72) Att: 43,184

Sunday, April 4

Birmingham 1 (Ridgewell 56)
Liverpool 1 (Gerrard 47) Att: 27,909

Everton 2 (Bilyaletdinov 24, Yakubu 85)
West Ham 2 (Da Costa 60, Ilan 87) Att: 37,451

Fulham 2 (Okaka 47, Hangeland 58)
Wigan 1 (Scotland 34) Att: 22,730

Saturday, April 10

Hull 1 (Kilbane 3)
Burnley 4 (Paterson 35, Alexander pen 64, pen 70, Elliott 90) Att: 24,369

West Ham 1 (Ilan 51)
Sunderland 0 Att: 34,685

Sunday, April 11

Blackburn 0
Manchester United 0 Att: 29,912

Liverpool 0
Fulham 0 Att: 42,331

Manchester City 5 (Tevez pen 38, 40, Adebayor 43, 88, Onuoha 74)
Birmingham 1 (Jerome 42) Att: 45,209

Wolverhampton 0
Stoke 0 Att: 28,455

Tuesday, April 13

Chelsea 1 (Anelka 43)
Bolton 0 Att: 40,539

Wednesday, April 14

Aston Villa 2 (Agbonlahor 72, Jagielka og 90)
Everton 2 (Cahill 23, 74) Att: 38,729

Tottenham 2 (Rose 10, Bale 47)
Arsenal 1 (Bendtner 85) Att: 36,041

Wigan 0
Portsmouth 0 Att: 14,166

Saturday, April 17

Birmingham 0
Hull 0 Att: 26,669

Blackburn 2 (Nzonzi 69, Roberts 81)
Everton 3 (Arteta pen 4, Yakubu 79, Cahill 90) Att: 27,022

Fulham 0
Wolverhampton 0 Att: 25,597

Manchester City 0
Manchester United 1 (Scholes 90) Att: 47,019

Stoke 1 (Kitson 13)
Bolton 2 (Taylor 85, 88) Att: 27,250

Sunderland 2 (Campbell 25, Bent 40)
Burnley 1 (Thompson 82) Att: 41,341

Tottenham 2 (Defoe pen 14, Bale 44)
Chelsea 1 (Lampard 90) Att: 35,814

Sunday, April 18

Portsmouth 1 (Brown 9)
Aston Villa 2 (Carew 16, Delfouneso 82) Att: 16,523

Wigan 3 (Watson 80, Bramble 89, N'Zogbia 90)
Arsenal 2 (Walcott 41, Silvestre 48) Att: 22,113

Monday, April 19

Liverpool 3 (Benayoun 19, Ngog 29, Green og 59)
West Ham 0 Att: 37,697

Wednesday, April 21

Hull 0
Aston Villa 2 (Agbonlahor 13, Milner pen 76) Att: 23,842

Saturday, April 24

Arsenal 0
Manchester City 0 Att: 60,086

Bolton 2 (Klasnic 26, K Davies 28)
Portsmouth 2 (Dindane 54, 68) Att: 20,526

Hull 0
Sunderland 1 (Bent 7) Att: 25,012

Manchester United 3 (Giggs pen 58, pen 86, Nani 81)
Tottenham 1 (King 70) Att: 75,268

West Ham 3 (Ilan 31, Kovac 45, Parker 77)
Wigan 2 (Spector og 4, Rodallega 52) Att: 33,057

Wolverhampton 1 (Ebanks-Blake 81)
Blackburn 1 (Nelsen 28) Att: 28,967

Sunday, April 25

Aston Villa 1 (Milner pen 83)
Birmingham 0 Att: 42,788

Burnley 0
Liverpool 4 (Gerrard 52, 59, Rodriguez 74, Babel 90) Att: 21,553

Chelsea 7 (Kalou 24, 31, 68, Lampard pen 44, 81, Sturridge 87, Malouda 89)
Stoke 0 Att: 41,013

Everton 2 (Smalling og 50, Arteta pen 90)
Fulham 1 (Nevland 36) Att: 35,578

Saturday, May 1

Birmingham 2 (Jensen og 29, Benitez 41)
Burnley 1 (Thompson 87) Att: 24,578

Manchester City 3 (Tevez pen 41, Adebayor 43, Bellamy 89)
Aston Villa 1 (Carew 16) Att: 47,102

Portsmouth 3 (Dindane 20, Utaka 39, Brown 67)
Wolverhampton 1 (Doyle 35) Att: 19,213

Stoke 0
Everton 0 Att: 27,579

Tottenham 1 (Huddlestone 38)
Bolton 0 Att: 35,852

Sunday, May 2

Fulham 3 (Dempsey 45, Cole og 58, Okaka 79)
West Ham 2 (Cole 61, Franco 90) Att: 24,201

Liverpool 0
Chelsea 2 (Drogba 33, Lampard 54) Att: 44,375

Sunderland 0
Manchester United 1 (Nani 28) Att: 47,641

Monday, May 3

Blackburn 2 (Dunn 43, Samba 68)
Arsenal 1 (Van Persie 13) Att: 26,138

Wigan 2 (Moses 30, Gohouri 90)
Hull 2 (Atkinson 42, Cullen 64) Att: 20,242

Wednesday, May 5

Fulham 0
Stoke 1 (Etherington 83) Att: 20,831

Manchester City 0
Tottenham 1 (Crouch 82) Att: 47,370

Sunday, May 9

Arsenal 4 (Arshavin 21, Van Persie 26, Baird og 37, Vela 84)
Fulham 0 Att: 60,039

Aston Villa 0
Blackburn 1 (Dunne og 84) Att: 41,799

Bolton 2 (K Davies 33, Klasnic 60)
Birmingham 1 (McFadden 76) Att: 22,863

Burnley 4 (Elliott 42, Cork 54, Paterson 71, Thompson 88)
Tottenham 2 (Bale 3, Modric 32) Att: 21,161

Chelsea 8 (Anelka 6, 56, Lampard pen 32, Kalou 54, Drogba 63, pen 68, 80, A Cole 90)
Wigan 0 Att: 41,383

Everton 1 (Bilyaletdinov 90)
Portsmouth 0 Att: 38,730

Hull 0
Liverpool 0 Att: 25,030

Manchester United 4 (Fletcher 31, Giggs 38, Higginbotham og 54, Park 84)
Stoke 0 Att: 75,316

West Ham 1 (Boa Morte 17)
Manchester City 1 (Wright-Phillips 21) Att: 34,989

Wolverhampton 2 (Doyle pen 10, Guedioura 78)
Sunderland 1 (Jones 8) Att: 28,971

Champ... MyPa's Antti Okkonen

ESTONIA

Flora beaten again

Levadia beat Flora 3-0 in the Estonian Cup Final to end the latter's two-year hold on the trophy. Andero Pebre, Vitali Leitan and Artjom Dmitrijev were on target for the club from Tallinn, who also beat Flora in the Super Cup earlier this season.

In the Meistriliiga, Flora are top of the table, two points clear of Trans (who have played two games more) and three ahead of Levadia.

FAROE ISLANDS

NSI's remarkable rise

NSI Runavik have risen from the bottom of the table to second place after a run of six successive victories.

After a poor start to the season, NSI Runavik's terrific run culminated in a 5-3 win away to IF Fuglafjordur, who were top of the league before being overtaken by title-holders HB Torshavn. The victory was even more impressive as NSI had to come from 3-1 down.

FINLAND

Fair Play for Euro place

MyPa, who finished ninth last season, will play in the first

6 players loaned from Brazilian club Atletico Paranaense by Georgian champions Olimpi

ENGLAND – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chelsea	38	27	5	6	103	32	86
Man Utd	38	27	4	7	86	28	85
Arsenal	38	23	6	9	83	41	75
Tottenham	38	21	7	10	67	41	70
Man City	38	18	13	7	73	45	67
Aston Villa	38	17	13	8	52	39	64
Liverpool	38	18	9	11	61	35	63
Everton	38	16	13	9	60	49	61
Birmingham	38	13	11	14	38	47	50
Blackburn	38	13	11	14	41	55	50
Stoke	38	11	14	13	34	48	47
Fulham	38	12	10	16	39	46	46
Sunderland	38	11	11	16	48	56	44
Bolton	38	10	9	19	42	67	39
Wolves	38	9	11	18	32	56	38
Wigan	38	9	9	20	37	79	36
West Ham	38	8	11	19	47	66	35
Burnley (R)	38	8	6	24	42	82	30
Hull (R)	38	6	12	20	34	75	30
Portsmouth* (R)	38	7	7	24	34	66	19

**9pts deducted for going into administration*

TOP GOALSCORERS

29 Didier Drogba (Chelsea)
26 Wayne Rooney (Manchester United)
24 Darren Bent (Sunderland)
23 Carlos Tevez (Manchester City)
22 Frank Lampard (Chelsea)

Promoted: *Newcastle United, West Bromwich Albion, Blackpool*

FA CUP

Semi-finals

Apr 10: Aston Villa 0 Chelsea 3.
Apr 11: Tottenham 0 Portsmouth 2 (aet).

Final

May 15 - Wembley stadium, London
Chelsea 1 (Drogba 59)
Portsmouth 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 88,335. **Ref:** Foy

ESTONIA

ESTONIAN CUP

Final

May 11 - Kadrioru stadium, Tallinn
Flora Tallinn 0
Levadia Tallinn 3 (Pebre 33, Leitan 61, Dmitrijev 72)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 950. **Ref:** Kotter

FINLAND

FINLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
HJK	7	4	2	1	14	5	14
Honka	7	4	2	1	10	3	14
KuPS	7	4	1	2	12	12	13
Haka	7	3	2	2	9	7	11
Tampere	7	3	2	2	10	11	11
TPS	7	2	4	1	9	7	10
JJK	7	3	1	3	7	7	10
Jaro	7	2	3	2	11	10	9
MyPa	7	2	3	2	10	11	9
VPS	7	2	2	3	8	8	8
Oulu	7	2	2	3	8	10	8
Lahti	7	1	3	3	5	8	6
Inter	7	1	2	4	6	12	5
Mariehamn	7	0	3	4	4	12	3

Standings on June 3

FRANCE

Saturday, April 3

Bordeaux 1 (Cavenaghi 28)
Nancy 2 (Hadji 18, Dia 72) Att: 29,985

Grenoble 1 (Akrour 3)
Lorient 2 (Gameiro 32, Fanchone 85) Att: 12,744

Montpellier 0
Monaco 0 Att: 19,675

Nice 0
Sochaux 0 Att: 8,079

Rennes 1 (Gyan 15)
Lyon 2 (Michel Bastos 53, Lopez 61) Att: 28,244

Saint-Etienne 2 (Varrault 55, Benalouane 76)
Le Mans 0 Att: 26,540

Valenciennes 1 (Samassa 82)
Lille 0 Att: 12,127

Sunday, April 4

Auxerre 1 (Niculae 11)
Paris Saint-Germain 1 (Sankhare 16) Att: 16,464

Boulogne 1 (Kapo 36)
Toulouse 1 (Braaten 88) Att: 12,150

Marseille 1 (Brandao 22)
Lens 0 Att: 54,839

Wednesday, April 7

Marseille 3 (Heinze 9, Ben Arfa pen 27, Kone 90)
Sochaux 0 Att: 46,136

Saturday, April 10

Le Mans 2 (Lamah 1, 70)
Montpellier 2 (Ait-Fana 12, Camara pen 34) Att: 9,821

Lens 3 (Maoulida 33, 50, 66)
Boulogne 0 Att: 34,218

Lorient 1 (Diarra 13)
Rennes 1 (Danze 42) Att: 15,103

Monaco 2 (Nene 61, Maazou 78)
Valenciennes 1 (Bisevac 37) Att: 6,685

Paris Saint-Germain 3 (Armand 35, Erdinc 74, Hoarau 86)
Bordeaux 1 (Sane 80) Att: 42,127

Sochaux 0
Saint-Etienne 2 (Perrin 42, Bergessio 64) Att: 14,711

Toulouse 4 (Machado 9, Tabanou 65, 75, Gignac 85)
Grenoble 0 Att: 13,167

Sunday, April 11

Lyon 1 (Cris 71)
Lille 1 (Frau 62) Att: 38,659

Marseille 4 (Kone 42, Mbia 52, Valbuena 70, Diawara 73)
Nice 1 (Fae 90) Att: 51,229

Nancy 0
Auxerre 1 (Niculae 88) Att: 17,041

Wednesday, April 14

Le Mans 2 (Le Tallec 17, Dossevi 45)
Bordeaux 1 (Henrique 8) Att: 11,150

Sochaux 0
Marseille 1 (Mbia 88) Att: 19,992

Saturday, April 17

Auxerre 4 (Oliech 35, Jelen 36, Birsa 55, Hengbart pen 88)
Lorient 1 (Gameiro 82) Att: 15,439

Bordeaux 2 (Chamakh 25, Plasil 62)
Lyon 2 (Ederson 55, Cris 71) Att: 32,284

Boulogne 1 (Blayac 82)
Marseille 2 (Valbuena 44, Taiwo pen 90) Att: 15,242

Grenoble 2 (Ljuboja 55, Matsui 63)
Sochaux 2 (Brown 27, Brechet 74) Att: 12,960

Nice 0
Lens 0 Att: 8,969

Rennes 0
Nancy 0 Att: 25,275

Valenciennes 0
Le Mans 1 (Corchia 90) Att: 12,362

Sunday, April 18

Lille 4 (Chedjou 14, Cabaye pen 45, 75, De Melo 90)
Monaco 0 Att: 16,894

Montpellier 1 (Costa 32)
Toulouse 1 (Kazim-Richards 90) Att: 19,299

Saint-Etienne 0
Paris Saint-Germain 0 Att: 26,493

Saturday, April 24

Le Mans 1 (Maiga 55)
Lille 2 (De Melo 13, Cabaye pen 79) Att: 10,301

Lorient 1 (Gameiro 57)
Bordeaux 0 Att: 15,708

Nancy 0
Montpellier 0 Att: 16,361

Nice 2 (Mouloungui 35, Fae 77)
Grenoble 1 (Akrour 22) Att: 8,399

Paris Saint-Germain 1 (Hoarau 64)
Rennes 1 (Leroy 32) Att: 32,596

Sochaux 0
Boulogne 3 (Thil 41, Yatabare 81, Blayac 90) Att: 14,112

Sunday, April 25

Lens 1 (Roudet 38)
Valenciennes 1 (Pujol 73) Att: 34,182

Marseille 1 (Valbuena 6)
Saint-Etienne 0 Att: 55,056

Toulouse 0
Auxerre 3 (Pedretti 47, Jelen 68, 79) Att: 21,561

Tuesday, April 27

Grenoble 4 (Batlles 26, Dieuze 44, Akrour 65, Ljuboja 68)
Paris Saint-Germain 0 Att: 12,386

Monaco 1 (Maazou 48)
Le Mans 1 (Dossevi 10) Att: 5,358

Wednesday, April 28

Valenciennes 2 (Pujol 11, Kadir 72)
Bordeaux 0 Att: 11,740

Friday, April 30

Auxerre 0
Marseille 0 Att: 20,005

Sunday, May 2

Bordeaux 1 (Ciani 17)
Toulouse 0 Att: 28,496

Boulogne 3 (Blayac 81, Kapo 88, Cuvillier 90)
Nice 3 (Remy 32, 56, Hellebuyck 62) Att: 11,694

Lille 3 (Cabaye 33, Gervinho 35, Frau 49)
Nancy 1 (Malonga 54) Att: 16,465

Montpellier 0
Lyon 1 (Michel Bastos 72) Att: 25,767

Rennes 1 (Marveaux pen 83)
Sochaux 2 (Briand og 28, Gavanon 81) Att: 17,265

Saint-Etienne 1 (Diakhate 44)
Lens 4 (Akale 55, Jemaa 60, Maoulida 83, 89) Att: 32,684

Valenciennes 0
Lorient 0 Att: 11,164

Wednesday, May 5

Boulogne 0
Saint-Etienne 1 (Riviere 87) Att: 12,408

Lens 1 (Maoulida 68)
Grenoble 1 (Courtois 45) Att: 32,686

Lorient 2 (Amalfitano 42, Gameiro 80)
Monaco 2 (Haruna 41, Maazou 71) Att: 15,436

Lyon 2 (Lopez pen 45, Pjanic 84)
Auxerre 1 (Jelen 15) Att: 36,262

Marseille 3 (Heinze 4, Niang 76, Gonzalez 77)
Rennes 1 (Briand 38) Att: 53,177

Nancy 3 (Feret 18, 32, Malonga 62)
Le Mans 2 (Maiga 25, Dossevi 27) Att: 15,015

Nice 1 (Fae 27)
Bordeaux 1 (Wendel 34) Att: 8,706

Paris Saint-Germain 2 (Erdinc 30, Kezman 90+1)
Valenciennes 2 (Bong 59, Ben Khalfallah 90+4) Att: 26,000

Sochaux 0
Montpellier 1 (Costa 72) Att: 12,281

Toulouse 0
Lille 2 (Cabaye 34, Obraniak 48) Att: 13,000

Saturday, May 8

Auxerre 0
Lens 0 Att: 18,080

Bordeaux 2 (Wendel pen 66, Tremoulinas 86)
Sochaux 0 Att: 28,146

Grenoble 2 (Ljuboja 34, 82)
Boulogne 0 Att: 12,863

Le Mans 1 (Armand og 9)
Paris Saint-Germain 0 Att: 8,582

qualifying round of the Europa League after Finland were awarded one of the Fair Play places. They are joined by Gefle of Sweden and Denmark's Randers.

FRANCE

Santini to assist

Former France coach Jacques Santini has joined Lens as assistant to Jean-Guy Wallemme. The 58-year-old coached Lyon to the 2001 League Cup and the Ligue 1 title in 2002, and led the national team to victory at the 2003 Confederations Cup.

GERMANY

Peruvian equals record

Claudio Pizarro's goal against Hamburg on the final day of the Bundesliga season not only secured Werder Bremen's place in next season's Champions League, it also meant the Peru striker equalled Giovane Elber's record as the highest-scoring foreign player in the history of the German top flight, with 133 league goals.

Meanwhile, Wolfsburg goalkeeper Andre Lenz underwent emergency surgery after being stabbed several times in a nightclub following the club's final league match of the season.

On target...Pizarro (second left) scores against Hamburg

Lille 3 (Cabaye pen 28, De Melo 81, Debuchy 90)
Marseille 2 (Niang 6, Hilton 45) Att: 17,688

Monaco 2 (Loties og 7, Maazou 58)
Nancy 1 (Sami 75) Att: 6,878

Montpellier 2 (Montano pen 30, Camara pen 43)
Lorient 1 (Bourillon 90) Att: 18,071

Rennes 2 (Leroy 60, Marveaux 66)
Nice 2 (Mounier 12, Fae 77) Att: 22,033

Saint-Etienne 0
Toulouse 1 (Gignac 62) Att: 27,103

Valenciennes 2 (Audel 72, Cohade pen 81)
Lyon 2 (Kallstrom 17, Balde og 90) Att: 13,206

Wednesday, May 12
Lyon 3 (Pjanic 28, Gomis 48, Lopez 87)
Monaco 0 Att: 38,428

Saturday, May 15
Boulogne 1 (Thil pen 20)
Rennes 0 Att: 12,015

Lens 4 (Maoulida 21, 63, Sow 37, Jemaa pen 57)
Bordeaux 3 (Wendel pen 41, pen 80, Bedimo og 49) Att: 39,201

Lorient 2 (Gameiro 36, Jouffre 65)
Lille 1 (Costa 32) Att: 16,337

Lyon 2 (Gomis 45, Pjanic 68)
Le Mans 0 Att: 37,353

Marseille 2 (Niang pen 41, Ben Arfa 90)
Grenoble 0 Att: 55,808

Nancy 1 (Hadji 39)
Valenciennes 1 (Angoua 65) Att: 17,103

Nice 1 (Remy 2)
Saint-Etienne 1 (Riviere 68) Att: 10,988

Paris Saint-Germain 1 (Erdinc 79)
Montpellier 3 (Dernis 16, 58, Compan 47) Att: 32,124

Sochaux 1 (Brown 47)
Auxerre 2 (Hengbart 6, 90) Att: 14,971

Toulouse 0
Monaco 0 Att: 16,641

FRANCE – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Marseille	38	23	9	6	69	36	78
Lyon	38	20	12	6	64	38	72
Auxerre	38	20	11	7	42	29	71
Lille	38	21	7	10	72	40	70
Montpellier	38	20	9	9	50	40	69
Bordeaux	38	19	7	12	58	40	64
Lorient	38	16	10	12	54	42	58
Monaco	38	15	10	13	39	45	55
Rennes	38	14	11	13	52	41	53
Valenciennes	38	14	10	14	50	50	52
Lens	38	12	12	14	40	44	48
Nancy	38	13	9	16	46	53	48
PSG	38	12	11	15	50	46	47
Toulouse	38	12	11	15	36	36	47
Nice	38	11	11	16	41	57	44
Sochaux	38	11	8	19	28	52	41
Saint-Etienne	38	10	10	18	27	45	40
Le Mans (R)	38	8	8	22	36	59	32
Boulogne (R)	38	7	10	21	31	62	31
Grenoble (R)	38	5	8	25	31	61	23

TOP GOALSCORERS
18 Mamadou Niang (Marseille)
17 Kevin Gameiro (Lorient)
15 Mevlut Erdinc (Paris Saint-Germain)
15 Lisandro Lopez (Lyon)

Promoted: *Caen, Brest, Arles-Avignon*

FRENCH CUP

Semi-finals
Apr 13: Monaco 1 Lens 0 (aet).
Apr 14: Quevilly 0 Paris Saint-Germain 1.

Final
May 1 - Stade de France, Paris
Monaco 0
Paris Saint-Germain 1 (Hoarau 105)
Aet. **HT:** 0-0. **90mins:** 0-0. **Att:** 75,000.
Ref: Jaffredo

GEORGIA

GEORGIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olimpi*	36	25	7	4	69	26	79
Dinamo	36	22	8	6	62	19	74
Zestaponi	36	19	10	7	58	33	67
WIT Georgia	36	17	13	6	48	31	64
Spartaki	36	11	10	15	44	58	43
Sioni	36	8	14	14	27	43	38
Samtredia	36	10	7	19	43	68	37
Baia	36	7	11	18	29	48	32
Lokomotivi (R)	36	5	11	20	19	50	26
Gagra (R)	36	5	9	22	30	59	24

**3pts deducted for crowd trouble*

Promoted: *Torpedo-2008, Kolkheti Poti*

GEORGIAN CUP

Final
May 26 - Boris Paichadze stadium, Tbilisi
WIT Georgia 1 (Datunaishvili 41)
Dinamo 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 12,000. **Ref:** Silagava

GERMANY

Saturday, April 3
Borussia Dortmund 2 (Grosskreutz 9, Subotic 22)
Werder Bremen 1 (Hunt 65) Att: 80,552

Eintracht Frankfurt 3 (Teber pen 28, Caio 62, Franz 88)
Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Kiessling 33, 46) Att: 50,900

Freiburg 1 (Cisse 18)
Bochum 1 (Dabrowski 23) Att: 21,500

Koln 0
Hertha Berlin 3 (Raffael 25, 45, Cicero 75) Att: 46,300

Nurnberg 2 (Frantz 14, Choupo-Moting 40)
Mainz 0 Att: 41,222

Schalke 1 (Kuranyi 31)
Bayern Munich 2 (Ribery 25, Muller 26) Att: 61,673

Stuttgart 2 (Marica 66, Kuzmanovic 83)
Monchengladbach 1 (Reus 33) Att: 42,000

Sunday, April 4
Hamburg 0
Hannover 0 Att: 57,000

Wolfsburg 4 (Dzeko 25, 75, Barzagli 51, Misimovic 74)
1899 Hoffenheim 0 Att: 28,107

Friday, April 9
Monchengladbach 2 (Reus 6, Dante 56)
Eintracht Frankfurt 0 Att: 48,553

Saturday, April 10
Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Vidal 59)
Bayern Munich 1 (Robben pen 51) Att: 30,210

Hannover 4 (Westermann og 17, Ya Konan 29, 90, Balitsch 80)
Schalke 2 (Edu 46, Rakitic pen 52) Att: 49,000

Hertha Berlin 0
Stuttgart 1 (Cacau 74) Att: 26,851

1899 Hoffenheim 0
Koln 2 (Matuschyk 46, 82) Att: 26,950

Mainz 1 (Szalai 30)
Borussia Dortmund 0 Att: 20,300

Werder Bremen 4 (Pizarro 35, 56, Hunt 54, Ozil 66)
Freiburg 0 Att: 37,000

Sunday, April 11
Bochum 1 (Dedic 32)
Hamburg 2 (Tesche 18, Johansson og 88) Att: 25,780

Nurnberg 0
Wolfsburg 2 (Dzeko 66, Grafite 78) Att: 40,593

Friday, April 16
Koln 2 (Tosic 15, 78)
Bochum 0 Att: 46,000

Saturday, April 17
Bayern Munich 7 (Olic 21, 49, Robben 30, 50, 90, Muller 44, 62)
Hannover 0 Att: 69,000

Freiburg 2 (Maroh og 4, Cisse 60)
Nurnberg 1 (Maroh 79) Att: 22,900

Hamburg 0
Mainz 1 (Bance 20) Att: 55,292

Schalke 3 (Rakitic 8, pen 47, Farfan 45)
Monchengladbach 1 (Bobadilla 16) Att: 61,673

Stuttgart 2 (Cacau 29, 85)
Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Kiessling 13) Att: 41,500

Wolfsburg 2 (Dzeko 18, Grafite 40)
Werder Bremen 4 (Frings pen 38, 62, Pizarro 49, Hugo Almeida 75) Att: 30,000

Sunday, April 18
Borussia Dortmund 1 (Haedo Valdez 57)
1899 Hoffenheim 1 (Ibisevic 89) Att: 80,100

Eintracht Frankfurt 2 (Korkmaz 37, Russ 63)
Hertha Berlin 2 (Kacar 17, Raffael 43) Att: 49,800

Friday, April 23
Bochum 0
Stuttgart 2 (Cacau 14, Marica 18) Att: 25,431

Saturday, April 24
Bayer Leverkusen 3 (Kiessling 25, pen 88, Kaplan 64)
Hannover 0 Att: 30,210

Hertha Berlin 0
Schalke 1 (Westermann 87) Att: 61,902

Mainz 3 (Bance 45, 86, Simak 56)
Eintracht Frankfurt 3 (Meier 13, 20, Korkmaz 62) Att: 20,300

Monchengladbach 1 (Reus 60)
Bayern Munich 1 (Klose 73) Att: 54,057

Nurnberg 2 (Frantz 30, Eigler 84)
Borussia Dortmund 3 (Barrios 27, 62, 78) Att: 48,548

Werder Bremen 1 (Frings pen 90)
Koln 0 Att: 37,900

Sunday, April 25
Freiburg 1 (Makiadi 38)
Wolfsburg 0 Att: 22,700

1899 Hoffenheim 5 (Ibisevic 2, 11, Obasi 31, 72, Salihovic 76)
Hamburg 1 (Tesche 65) Att: 30,150

Saturday, May 1
Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Friedrich 59)
Hertha Berlin 1 (Raffael 12) Att: 30,210

Bayern Munich 3 (Muller 18, 20, 69)
Bochum 1 (Fuchs 85) Att: 69,000

Borussia Dortmund 1 (Stiepermann 81)
Wolfsburg 1 (Dzeko 69) Att: 80,300

Eintracht Frankfurt 1 (Schwegler 20)
1899 Hoffenheim 2 (Tagoe 80, 88) Att: 50,500

Hamburg 4 (Pitroipa 9, Petric 19, 25, Van Nistelrooy 73)
Nurnberg 0 Att: 53,727

Hannover 6 (Haggui 16, Pinto 23, Ya Konan 27, Hanke 38, Chahed 53, Bruggink 74)
Monchengladbach 1 (Herrmann 69) Att: 49,000

Koln 2 (Tosic 9, Freis 84)
Freiburg 2 (Idrissou 31, 57) Att: 49,200

Schalke 0
Werder Bremen 2 (Ozil 55, Hugo Almeida 64) Att: 61,673

Stuttgart 2 (Marica 73, 75)
Mainz 2 (Fathi 52, Schurrle 63) Att: 41,600

Saturday, May 8
Bochum 0
Hannover 3 (Bruggink 9, Hanke 23, Pinto 45) Att: 30,748

Freiburg 3 (Idrissou 60, Cisse 70, 90)
Borussia Dortmund 1 (Barrios 47) Att: 24,000

Hertha Berlin 1 (Ramos 59)
Bayern Munich 3 (Olic 20, Robben 74, 87) Att: 75,420

1899 Hoffenheim 1 (Vukcevic 44)
Stuttgart 1 (Cacau 19) Att: 30,150

Mainz 0
Schalke 0 Att: 20,300

Monchengladbach 1 (Brouwers 55)
Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Helmes 34) Att: 54,057

Ashdod boss...Gregory

ISRAEL

Gregory's challenge

Former England midfielder John Gregory, who narrowly failed to keep Maccabi Ahi Nazareth in the top flight after being appointed coach in November, has agreed to join Ashdod. The ex-Aston Villa and Queens Park Rangers manager replaces Yossi Mizrahi, who led Ashdod to the State Cup semi-final.

All change...Guidolin

ITALY

Parma and Udinese coaches change jobs

Francesco Guidolin, who led Parma to eighth place in Serie A this season, has joined Udinese, whose coach Pasquale Marino has moved in the opposite direction.

However, Parma president Tommaso Ghirardi says: "This is not an exchange of coaches as Marino was our first choice. Guidolin still had one year left in his contract with us but he opted to leave. We came close to signing Marino three years ago but he had already signed for Udinese."

Next season's Super Cup game, between champions Internazionale and runners-up Roma will take place in Beijing. This will be the second year in a row that the official opening game of the Italian season has been held in China.

Nurnberg 1 (Ottl 88)
Koln 0 Att: 48,548

Werder Bremen 1 (Pizarro 58)
Hamburg 1 (Van Nistelrooy 82) Att: 41,150

Wolfsburg 3 (Misimovic 21, Riether 31, Dzeko 34)
Eintracht Frankfurt 1 (Altintop 86) Att: 30,000

GERMANY – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern	34	20	10	4	72	31	70
Schalke	34	19	8	7	53	31	65
Werder	34	17	10	7	71	40	61
B Leverkusen	34	15	14	5	65	38	59
B Dortmund	34	16	9	9	54	42	57
Stuttgart	34	15	10	9	51	41	55
Hamburg	34	13	13	8	56	41	52
Wolfsburg	34	14	8	12	64	58	50
Mainz	34	12	11	11	36	42	47
E Frankfurt	34	12	10	12	47	54	46
Hoffenheim	34	11	9	14	44	42	42
M'gladbach	34	10	9	15	43	60	39
Koln	34	9	11	14	33	42	38
Freiburg	34	9	8	17	35	59	35
Hannover	34	9	6	19	43	67	33
Nurnberg	34	8	7	19	32	58	31
Bochum (R)	34	6	10	18	33	64	28
Hertha (R)	34	5	9	20	34	56	24

TOP GOALSCORERS
22 Edin Dzeko (Wolfsburg)
21 Stefan Kiessling (Bayer Leverkusen)
19 Lucas Barrios (Borussia Dortmund)
18 Kevin Kuranyi (Schalke)
16 Claudio Pizarro (Werder Bremen)
16 Arjen Robben (Bayern Munich)

Promoted: *Kaiserslautern, St Pauli*

GERMAN CUP

Final

May 15 - Olympic stadium, Berlin
Werder Bremen 0
Bayern Munich 4 (Robben pen 35, Olic 51, Ribery 63, Schweinsteiger 83)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 75,420. **Ref:** Kinhofer
Sent off: Frings (Werder) 76min

GREECE

Apr 11: Levadiakos 0 AEK 0; PAOK 1 Kavala 0; Ergotelis 3 Giannina 1; Panathinaikos 2 Iraklis 0; Xanthi 2 Atromitos 1; Asteras 2 Aris 1; Panthrakikos 0 Olympiakos 2; Panionios 0 Larisa 3.
Apr 18: PAOK 4 Ergotelis 1; Giannina 0 Panathinaikos 1; Kavala 1 Panionios 1; Iraklis 2 Xanthi 4; Larisa 1 Levadiakos 2; Atromitos 3 Panthrakikos 1; AEK 2 Asteras 0; Olympiakos 2 Aris 1.

GREECE – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Panathinaikos	30	22	4	4	54	17	70
Olympiakos*	30	19	7	4	47	18	64
PAOK*	30	19	5	6	41	16	62
AEK*	30	15	8	7	43	31	53
Aris*	30	12	10	8	35	28	46
Kavala	30	10	9	11	31	32	39
Atromitos	30	10	8	12	34	36	38
Larisa	30	10	7	13	31	42	37
Panionios	30	9	10	11	34	35	37
Iraklis	30	10	7	13	39	41	37
Ergotelis	30	9	9	12	37	41	36
Asteras	30	10	6	14	29	36	36
Xanthi	30	10	5	15	27	36	35
Levadiakos (R)	30	9	7	14	31	44	34
Giannina (R)	30	7	7	16	27	46	28
Panth'kikos (R)	30	3	3	24	21	62	12

**Teams placed 2nd to 5th entered play-offs to determine Greece's second Champions League representatives – PAOK won the place*

TOP GOALSCORER
23 Djibril Cisse (Panathinaikos)

Promoted: *Olympiakos Volou, Kerkyra (plus one other – promotion play-off fixtures not completed by press time)*

GREEK CUP

Final

Apr 24 - Olympic stadium, Athens
Panathinaikos 1 (Leto 63)
Aris 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 47,000

HOLLAND

Mar 31: Feyenoord 2 Vitesse 1.
Apr 3: VVV 0 Twente 2; Roda JC 5 RKC 1; AZ 2 Utrecht 0; Vitesse 3 Groningen 0; Heerenveen 4 Sparta 1.
Apr 4: Den Haag 0 Ajax 1; Feyenoord 0 NAC 0; Willem II 0 PSV 1; Heracles 2 NEC 0.
Apr 9: RKC 4 Vitesse 1.
Apr 10: Twente 2 Heerenveen 0; NAC 1 Roda JC 0; NEC 0 AZ 0; Sparta 1 Heracles 1.
Apr 11: PSV 0 Feyenoord 0; Utrecht 0 Den Haag 2; Groningen 4 Willem II 0; Ajax 7 VVV 0.
Apr 13: AZ 1 Twente 0; Heracles 4 RKC 1; Vitesse 1 NAC 1.
Apr 14: Roda JC 4 VVV 2; Willem II 0 Ajax 2; Heerenveen 2 PSV 2; Feyenoord 3 Sparta 0; Utrecht 1 Groningen 1; Den Haag 2 NEC 3.
Apr 18: Heerenveen 0 NAC 0; Twente 2 Feyenoord 0; PSV 3 Groningen 1; Willem II 0 AZ 3; Den Haag 4 RKC 0; Vitesse 2 Roda JC 5; VVV 2 NEC 0; Sparta 0 Utrecht 3; Ajax 4 Heracles 0.
May 2: AZ 1 PSV 1; Feyenoord 6 Heerenveen 2; RKC 1 VVV 2; Heracles 4 Den Haag 2; Utrecht 2 Vitesse 2; Groningen 3 Sparta 1; NEC 1 Ajax 4; Roda JC 3 Willem II 2; NAC 0 Twente 2.

HOLLAND – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Twente	34	27	5	2	63	23	86
Ajax	34	27	4	3	106	20	85
PSV	34	23	9	2	72	29	78
Feyenoord	34	17	12	5	54	31	63
AZ	34	19	5	10	64	34	62
Heracles**	34	17	5	12	54	49	56
Utrecht**	34	14	11	9	39	33	53
Groningen**	34	14	7	13	48	47	49
Roda JC**	34	14	5	15	56	60	47
NAC	34	12	10	12	42	49	46
Heerenveen	34	11	4	19	44	64	37
VVV	34	8	11	15	43	57	35
NEC	34	8	9	17	35	59	33
Vitesse	34	8	8	18	38	62	32
Den Haag	34	7	9	18	38	59	30
Sparta (R)*	34	6	8	20	30	66	26
Willem II	34	7	2	25	36	70	23
RKC (R)	34	5	0	29	30	80	15

**Relegated after play-offs*
***Teams placed 6th to 9th entered play-offs for a Europa League place – Utrecht won it*

TOP GOALSCORERS
35 Luis Suarez (Ajax)
24 Bryan Ruiz (Twente)
21 Mads Junker (Roda JC)
20 Mounir El Hamdaoui (AZ)

Promoted: *De Graafschap, Excelsior*

DUTCH CUP

Final, 1st leg

Apr 25
Ajax 2 (De Jong 6, 7)
Feyenoord 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 37,283. **Ref:** Braamhaar

Final, 2nd leg

May 6
Feyenoord 1 (Tomasson 72)
Ajax 4 (Suarez 4, 82, De Jong 64, 77)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Luinge
Ajax 6-1 on agg

HUNGARY

HUNGARY – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Debrecen	30	20	2	8	63	37	62
Videoton	30	18	7	5	59	31	61
Gyor	30	15	12	3	38	18	57
Ujpest	30	17	4	9	49	39	55
Zalaegerszeg	30	15	8	7	59	44	53
MTK	30	12	7	11	52	41	43
Ferencvaros	30	10	11	9	34	35	41
Szombathely	30	10	9	11	46	49	39
Honved	30	9	11	10	38	35	38
Kecskemet	30	10	7	13	50	56	37
Papa	30	10	5	15	39	50	35
Kaposvar	30	8	8	14	38	50	32
Vasas	30	8	7	15	39	61	31
Paks	30	7	10	13	30	44	31
Nyiregy'za (R)	30	6	9	15	41	60	27
Diosgyor (R)	30	4	5	21	31	56	17

Promoted teams not decided by press time

HUNGARIAN CUP

Final

May 26 - Ferenc Puskas stadium, Budapest
Debrecen 3 (Coulibaly 24, 68, Yannick 30)
Zalaegerszeg 2 (Pavicevic 41, Rudnevs 70)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 6,000. **Ref:** Vad

ISRAEL

Teams carried forward half their points (rounded up) and full results and goals record from the 30-round regular season

ISRAEL – CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hap Tel Aviv	35	25	9	1	87	26	49
Maccabi Haifa	35	28	3	4	72	16	49
Mac Tel Aviv	35	17	9	9	52	35	34
Bnei Yehuda	35	14	11	10	43	34	31
Beitar	35	14	7	14	50	44	26
Ashdod	35	11	10	14	36	45	22

ISRAEL – MIDDLE GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bnei Sakhnin	33	13	8	12	31	31	27
M Petach Tikva	33	10	11	12	44	47	24
Be'er Sheva	33	11	10	12	49	55	23
Netanya	33	10	9	14	44	47	21

ISRAEL – RELEGATION GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hapoel Haifa	35	10	9	16	44	50	23
Acre	35	7	14	14	38	52	23
H Petach Tikva	35	8	14	13	28	48	23
Ramat Gan	35	9	11	15	34	49	22
Ra'anana (R)	35	6	10	19	33	58	18
A Nazareth (R)	35	7	7	21	33	81	16

Promoted: *Ironi Kiriat-Shmona, Hapoel Ashkelon*

ISRAELI CUP

Final

May 11 - Ramat Gan stadium
Hapoel Tel Aviv 3 (Vermouth 25, 75, Enyeama pen 42)
Bnei Yehuda 1 (Douglas og 38)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 34,442. **Ref:** Tabrizi
Sent off: Aiyenugba (Bnei Yehuda) 43min

ITALY

Saturday, April 3

Atalanta 2 (Valdes 16, Ferreira Pinto 70)
Siena 0 Att: 13,000

Bari 0
Roma 1 (Vucinic 19) Att: 25,000

Cagliari 2 (Ragatzu 17, Matri 32)
Milan 3 (Borriello 7, Huntelaar 19, Astori og 38) Att: 20,000

Catania 2 (Lopez 14, 32)
Palermo 0 Att: 18,000

Chievo 1 (Mantovani 76)
Sampdoria 2 (Cassano 1, Pazzini 55) Att: 11,000

Genoa 1 (Boakye 51)
Livorno 1 (Tavano 88) Att: 25,260

Inter 3 (Thiago Motta 29, 85, Balotelli 52)
Bologna 0 Att: 58,000

Lazio 1 (Floccari 4)
Napoli 1 (Hamsik 38) Att: 32,000

Parma 1 (Bozhinov 68)
Fiorentina 1 (De Silvestri 22) Att: 19,000

Udinese 3 (Sanchez 9, Pepe 65, Di Natale 76)
Juventus 0 Att: 17,000

LATVIA

Jelgava spot on...again

Jelgava triumphed in a penalty shoot-out for the third round in succession to beat Jurmala in the Latvian Cup Final.

Trailing 2-1 with five minutes remaining, Valerijs Redjko's penalty took the game into extra time and, after 30 scoreless minutes, Jelgava won 6-5 on spot-kicks.

Elsewhere, Valerijs Sabala's consolation goal for bottom of the table RFS/Olimps in their 3-1 defeat by Skonto made him, at the age of 15 years and 193 days, the youngest scorer in Latvian league history.

LITHUANIA

Double secured

Ekranas came from behind to beat Vetra 2-1 to win the Lithuanian Cup for the first time in 10 years.

Victory also guaranteed Ekranas the Lithuanian Super Cup by virtue of the club holding both the league and domestic cup titles.

LUXEMBOURG

Dudelange dominance comes to an end

Jeunesse beat strugglers Rumelange 4-0 to reclaim the league title after a five-year monopoly of the trophy by Dudelange.

Meanwhile, substitute Dario Soraire scored his first goal of the season as Differdange beat Grevenmacher 1-0 to win the Luxembourg Cup for the first time since their formation in 2003. The club came about following a merger between Red Boys Differdange (who won the Cup 15 times) and AS Differdange.

Comeback...Ekranas (in red)

Saturday, April 10

Fiorentina 2 (Keirrison 11, Kroldrup 82)
Inter 2 (Milito 74, Eto'o 81) Att: 36,981

Napoli 2 (Quagliarella 3, Hamsik 78)
Parma 3 (Antonelli 63, Lucarelli 68, Jimenez 87) Att: 36,527

Sunday, April 11

Bologna 2 (Guana 12, Portanova 16)
Lazio 3 (Mauri 44, Dias 63, Rocchi 68) Att: 20,952

Juventus 1 (Chiellini 35)
Cagliari 0 Att: 22,634

Livorno 0
Udinese 2 (Sanchez 8, Di Natale 35) Att: 8,494

Milan 2 (Borriello 47, 80)
Catania 2 (Lopez 12, Ricchiuti 43) Att: 47,124

Palermo 3 (Pastore 28, Miccoli pen 39, 53)
Chievo 1 (De Paula 18) Att: 25,917

Roma 2 (Vucinic 12, Cassetti 27)
Atalanta 1 (Tiribocchi 53) Att: 49,803

Sampdoria 1 (Cassano 23)
Genoa 0 Att: 34,494

Siena 3 (Ghezzal 18, 62, Rosi 66)
Bari 2 (Rivas 13, Castillo 22) Att: 9,943

Friday, April 16

Inter 2 (Maicon 75, Eto'o 90)
Juventus 0 Att: 50,000

Saturday, April 17

Chievo 2 (Pellissier 28, Abbruscato 88)
Livorno 0 Att: 10,000

Sunday, April 18

Atalanta 2 (Ferreira Pinto 6, Tiribocchi 68)
Fiorentina 1 (Montolivo 75) Att: 13,614

Bari 1 (Almiron 75)
Napoli 2 (Lavezzi 28, 57) Att: 19,507

Cagliari 2 (Cossu 28, Jeda 87)
Palermo 2 (Miccoli 88, Hernandez 90) Att: 10,000

Catania 2 (Lopez 11, Biagianti 50)
Siena 2 (Maccarone 49, Vergassola 69) Att: 18,106

Lazio 1 (Rocchi 14)
Roma 2 (Vucinic pen 53, 63) Att: 61,615

Parma 2 (Zaccardo 59, Bocchetti og 62)
Genoa 3 (Palacio 33, 51, Fatic 72) Att: 16,660

Sampdoria 2 (Cassano pen 54, Pazzini 90)
Milan 1 (Borriello 20) Att: 28,763

Udinese 1 (Di Natale 90)
Bologna 1 (Zapata og 3) Att: 17,570

Saturday, April 24

Inter 3 (Milito 24, Muntari 35, Chivu 78)
Atalanta 1 (Tiribocchi 5) Att: 55,000

Palermo 3 (Bovo 9, Hernandez 18, Miccoli 69)
Milan 1 (Seedorf 55) Att: 25,695

Sunday, April 25

Bologna 2 (Di Vaio 38, 50)
Parma 1 (Biabiany 23) Att: 23,970

Fiorentina 0
Chievo 2 (Pellissier 54, Sardo 75) Att: 26,198

Genoa 1 (Palacio 8)
Lazio 2 (Dias 25, Floccari 32) Att: 26,082

Juventus 3 (Iaquinta 53, 86, Del Piero pen 69)
Bari 0 Att: 24,147

Livorno 3 (Lucarelli pen 50, Bellucci 60, Bergvold 66)
Catania 1 (Lopez 87) Att: 8,177

Napoli 0
Cagliari 0 Att: 41,450

Roma 1 (Totti 14)
Sampdoria 2 (Pazzini 52, 85) Att: 56,379

Udinese 4 (Pepe 18, 42, Sanchez 61, Di Natale pen 81)
Siena 1 (Calaio 40) Att: 16,033

Saturday, May 1

Milan 1 (Ronaldinho pen 78)
Fiorentina 0 Att: 47,579

Parma 1 (Lanzafame 81)
Roma 2 (Totti 5, Taddei 75) Att: 35,014

Sunday, May 2

Atalanta 1 (Guarente 23)
Bologna 1 (Peluso og 82) Att: 14,105

Bari 3 (Meggiorini 57, Castillo 85, Barreto 89)
Genoa 0 Att: 14,783

Cagliari 2 (Lazzari 15, Jeda 58)
Udinese 2 (Di Natale 26, Sanchez 28) Att: 6,000

Catania 1 (Silvestre 24)
Juventus 1 (Marchisio 52) Att: 18,582

Chievo 1 (Granoche 75)
Napoli 2 (Denis 45, Lavezzi 86) Att: 11,049

Lazio 0
Inter 2 (Samuel 45, Thiago Motta 70) Att: 50,945

Sampdoria 2 (Cassano 5, Ziegler 84)
Livorno 0 Att: 25,076

Siena 1 (Calaio 80)
Palermo 2 (Cavani 24, Miccoli 58) Att: 11,156

Sunday, May 9

Bologna 1 (Di Vaio 15)
Catania 1 (Lopez 51) Att: 22,279

Fiorentina 1 (Marchionni 15)
Siena 1 (Vergassola 3) Att: 29,378

Genoa 1 (Sculli 57)
Milan 0
Game played behind closed doors following threats of violence from both sets of fans

Inter 4 (Mantovani og 13, Cambiasso 34, Milito 39, Balotelli 52)
Chievo 3 (Thiago Motta og 12, Granoche 60, Pellissier 74) Att: 75,379

Juventus 2 (Del Piero 16, Iaquinta 90)
Parma 3 (Lanzafame 24, 35, Biabiany 85) Att: 23,666

Livorno 1 (Lucarelli 33)
Lazio 2 (Rocchi 13, Brocchi 44) Att: 9,214

Napoli 2 (Quagliarella 43, 83)
Atalanta 0 Att: 43,111

Palermo 1 (Miccoli pen 68)
Sampdoria 1 (Pazzini pen 54) Att: 35,872

Roma 2 (Totti 79, pen 83)
Cagliari 1 (Lazzari 73) Att: 50,291

Udinese 3 (Di Natale 21, 62, Pepe 26)
Bari 3 (Barreto 18, Koman 39, Almiron 90) Att: 17,968

Saturday, May 15

Lazio 3 (Hitzlsperger 16, Floccari 45, Brocchi 53)
Udinese 1 (Di Natale 30) Att: 35,000

Milan 3 (Antonini 14, Ronaldinho 28, 67)
Juventus 0 Att: 66,108

Sunday, May 16

Atalanta 1 (Ceravolo 48)
Palermo 2 (Cavani 12, pen 90) Att: 9,000

Bari 2 (Stellini 36, Rivas 90)
Fiorentina 0 Att: 20,000

Cagliari 1 (Ragatzu 65)
Bologna 1 (Adailton 3) Att: 5,000

Catania 1 (Lopez 65)
Genoa 0 Att: 18,000

Chievo 0
Roma 2 (Vucinic 39, De Rossi 45) Att: 28,000

Parma 4 (Lanzafame 45, 46, Morrone 49, Crespo 90)
Livorno 1 (Danilevicius 72) Att: 17,272

Sampdoria 1 (Pazzini 51)
Napoli 0 Att: 31,000

Siena 0
Inter 1 (Milito 57) Att: 15,373

ITALY – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Inter	38	24	10	4	75	34	82
Roma	38	24	8	6	68	41	80
Milan	38	20	10	8	60	39	70
Sampdoria	38	19	10	9	49	41	67
Palermo	38	18	11	9	59	47	65
Napoli	38	15	14	9	50	43	59
Juventus	38	16	7	15	55	56	55
Parma	38	14	10	14	46	51	52
Genoa	38	14	9	15	57	61	51
Bari	38	13	11	14	49	49	50
Fiorentina	38	13	8	17	48	47	47
Lazio	38	11	13	14	39	43	46
Catania	38	10	15	13	44	45	45
Cagliari	38	11	11	16	56	58	44
Udinese	38	11	11	16	54	59	44
Chievo	38	12	8	18	37	42	44
Bologna	38	10	12	16	42	55	42
Atalanta (R)	38	9	8	21	37	53	35
Siena (R)	38	7	10	21	40	67	31
Livorno (R)	38	7	8	23	27	61	29

TOP GOALSCORERS

29 Antonio Di Natale (Udinese)
22 Diego Milito (Inter)
19 Fabrizio Miccoli (Palermo)
19 Giampaolo Pazzini (Sampdoria)
15 Alberto Gilardino (Fiorentina)

Promoted: *Lecce, Cesena (plus one other – promotion play-offs not completed by press time)*

ITALIAN CUP

Semi-finals

1st legs - February 3/4; 2nd legs - April 13/21
Inter v Fiorentina 1-0, 1-0 (agg 2-0)
Roma v Udinese 2-0, 0-1 (agg 2-1)

Final

May 5 - Olympic stadium, Rome
Inter 1 (Milito 40)
Roma 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 50,000. **Ref:** Rizzoli
Sent off: Totti (Roma) 88min

LATVIA

LATVIAN CUP

Final

May 19 - Skonto stadium, Riga
Jelgava 2 (I Lapkovskis 55, Redjko pen 85)
Jurmala 2 (Paplavskis 14, Cistjakovs 76)
Aet. **HT:** 0-1. **90mins:** 2-2. **Att:** 4,000. **Ref:** Sipailo
Jelgava 6-5 on pens

LIECHTENSTEIN

LIECHTENSTEIN CUP

Final

May 13 - Rheinpark stadium, Vaduz
Vaduz 1 (Cerrone 71)
Eschen/Mauren 1 (Clemente 55)
Aet. **HT:** 0-0. **90mins:** 1-1. **Att:** 2,250.
Ref: Sperenda
Vaduz 4-2 on pens

LITHUANIA

LITHUANIAN CUP

Final

May 15 - S Darius & S Girenas stadium, Kaunas
Ekranas 2 (Galkevicius 69, Varnas 89)
Vetra 1 (Razanauskas 45)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 1,300. **Ref:** Gaigalas

LUXEMBOURG

LUXEMBOURG – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Jeunesse	26	17	6	3	45	20	57
Dudelange	26	16	6	4	62	23	54
Grev'macher	26	13	4	9	46	40	43
Differdange	26	12	6	8	41	30	42
Hamm	26	11	8	7	50	29	41
Fola	26	11	8	7	49	38	41
Racing	26	12	5	9	39	47	41
Etzella	26	8	8	10	42	43	32
Petange	26	9	5	12	36	42	32
Swift	26	8	5	13	33	42	29
Progres	26	6	10	10	39	44	28
Kaerjeng	26	7	7	12	28	36	28
Rumelange (R)	26	7	1	18	27	63	22
Mon'cange (R)	26	2	7	17	18	58	13

Promoted: *Wiltz 71, Jeunesse Canach*

LUXEMBOURG CUP

Final

May 30 - Josy Barthel stadium, Luxembourg
Differdange 1 (Soraire 89)
Grevenmacher 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 2,504. **Ref:** Parage

NORWAY

Eggen returns

Nils Arne Eggen has taken charge at Rosenborg for the remainder of the season after the club let Erik Hamren take up his role as full-time Sweden coach two months early.

Eggen, who was in charge for all but one campaign between 1992 and 2004 when Rosenborg won 13 straight Norwegian titles, said: "I am not a caretaker coach. Who am I holding the fort for?"

Steinar Nilsen left Brann after they suffered a shock Cup defeat to fourth-tier Fyllingen. Rune Skarsfjord has been appointed caretaker.

PORTUGAL

Porto appoint new boss

Andre Villas-Boas has replaced Jesualdo Ferreira in charge of Porto after taking Academica to 11th place in his first campaign as a head coach.

He was previously a member of Jose Mourinho's back-room staff at Porto, Chelsea and Internazionale.

Guimaraes have appointed Manuel Machado as their new coach following Paulo Sergio's departure for Sporting Lisbon. The 54-year-old arrives from Nacional, having previously guided Guimaraes to fifth place in 2004-05.

Appointed...Villas-Boas (left)

REP OF IRELAND

Bohs beat Pats

Reigning league champions Bohemians beat St Patrick's Athletic 1-0 with a first-half header from Anto Murphy to win the Setanta Sports Cup.

The first football match to be played at the new Aviva Stadium at Lansdowne Road will be between Manchester United and a League of Ireland XI on August 4.

MACEDONIA

MACEDONIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Renova	26	17	4	5	45	21	55
Rabotnicki	26	15	5	6	38	20	50
Metalurg	26	12	11	3	35	16	47
Pelister	26	11	6	9	28	27	39
Sileks	26	8	8	10	29	33	32
Vardar**	26	9	6	11	31	28	30
Teteks	26	8	6	12	31	30	30
Turnovo**	26	8	5	13	27	35	26
Milano (R***)	26	1	3	22	14	81	6
Maked'ja* (R)	10	5	4	1	23	5	0
Sloga* (R)	10	3	2	5	9	14	0

Pobeda expelled from league; all results expunged
**Makedonija and Sloga expelled from league after failing to fulfil two consecutive fixtures; forfeited all points gained*
***3pts deducted for failing to fulfil a fixture*
****Relegated after play-off*

Promoted: *Shkendija, Skopje, Napredok, Bregalnica Stip*

MACEDONIAN CUP

Final

May 26 - Philip II Arena, Skopje
Rabotnicki 2 (Gligorov 70, Petkovski 84)
Teteks 3 (Zaharievski pen 46, Hyseni 49, Stojanovski 64)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Kiprijanovski

MALTA

Teams carried forward half their points (rounded up) and full results and goals record from the 18-round regular season

MALTA – CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Birkirkara	28	20	4	4	64	32	45
Valletta	28	20	4	4	71	25	44
Qormi*	28	15	2	11	53	36	30
Sliema*	28	14	2	12	41	37	30
Tarxien	28	10	6	12	41	50	23
Hibernians	28	8	6	14	40	51	17

**Sliema beat Qormi in a play-off for third place (and a Europa League berth) after finishing level on points*

MALTA – RELEGATION GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Floriana	24	10	6	8	35	41	25
Hamrun	24	10	4	10	41	39	24
Dingli (R)	24	2	0	22	23	71	5
Msida St J* (R)	24	4	4	16	24	51	1

**10pts deducted for failing to pay a former coach and several former players*

Promoted: *Marsaxlokk, Vittoriosa Stars*

MALTESE CUP

Final

May 23
Valletta 2 (Mifsud 8, Scerri 21)
Qormi 1 (Camilo pen 78)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Pisani

MOLDOVA

MOLDOVA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sheriff	33	27	3	3	75	8	84
Iskra-Stal	33	19	8	6	50	25	65
Olimpia	33	17	9	7	45	23	60
Zimbru	33	17	8	8	47	29	59
Dacia	33	16	10	7	54	30	58
CSCA-Rapid	33	12	9	12	40	39	45
Academia	33	11	9	13	36	37	42
Viitorul	33	10	6	17	32	45	36
Tiraspol	33	8	10	15	20	34	34
Dinamo	33	9	5	19	36	66	32
S Gheorghe (R)	33	6	6	21	29	67	24
Nistru (R)	33	2	5	26	13	74	11

Promoted: *Lilcora, Costuleni*

MOLDOVAN CUP

Final

May 30 - Zimbru stadium, Chisinau
Dacia 0
Sheriff 2 (Franca 27, 52)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Banari

MONTENEGRO

MONTENEGRO – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rudar	33	22	5	6	56	26	71
Buducnost	33	21	6	6	67	35	69
Mogren	33	16	9	8	49	34	57
Zeta	33	17	6	10	43	33	57
Grbalj	33	15	8	10	66	42	53
Lovcen	33	14	7	12	31	38	49
Sutjeska	33	11	7	15	33	36	40
Decic	33	9	11	13	28	34	38
OFK	33	10	6	17	38	49	36
Mornar**	33	9	8	16	29	49	34
Berane (R*)	33	8	6	19	28	49	30
Kom (R)	33	5	3	25	16	59	18

**Relegated after play-off*
***1pt deducted for fielding an ineligible player*

Promoted: *Mladost Podgorica, OFK Bar*

MONTENEGRIN CUP

Final

May 19 - Podgorica City stadium
Buducnost 1 (Stolica 81)
Rudar 2 (Randelovic pen 3, Igumanovic 36)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 4,000. **Ref:** Kaluderovic
Sent off: Perisic (Buducnost) 4min

NORTHERN IRELAND

Teams carried forward full record from the 33-round regular season

N IRELAND – CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Linfield	38	22	8	8	78	37	74
Cliftonville	38	21	6	11	69	42	69
Glentoran	38	19	8	11	58	46	65
Crusaders	38	17	9	12	57	52	60
Dungannon	38	16	9	13	56	58	57
Portadown	38	15	10	13	70	55	55

N IRELAND – RELEGATION GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Coleraine	38	16	9	13	76	62	57
Glenavon	38	12	7	19	47	67	43
Newry	38	10	12	16	38	63	42
Ballymena	38	11	7	20	46	56	40
Lisburn	38	11	6	21	45	76	39
Institute (R*)	38	6	13	19	36	62	31

**Relegated after play-off*

Promoted: *Donegal Celtic*

NORTHERN IRELAND CUP

Final

May 8 - Windsor Park, Belfast
Linfield 2 (Thompson 2, Lowry 10)
Portadown 1 (Braniff 13)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Courtney

NORWAY

Apr 5: Kongsvinger 1 Aalesund 2; Start 5 Valerenga 3; Haugesund 5 Honefoss 1; Rosenborg 3 Stromsgodset 0; Viking 0 Lillestrom 0; Stabaek 0 Tromso 1; Sandefjord 1 Odd Grenland 1; Molde 3 Brann 2.
Apr 10: Lillestrom 0 Stabaek 0.
Apr 11: Aalesund 3 Viking 1; Honefoss 1 Kongsvinger 2; Tromso 2 Haugesund 0; Stromsgodset 4 Sandefjord 2; Brann 3 Start 4; Odd Grenland 1 Rosenborg 3.
Apr 12: Valerenga 2 Molde 1.
Apr 14: Haugesund 2 Aalesund 1; Kongsvinger 0 Lillestrom 0; Viking 1 Tromso 1; Start 1 Odd Grenland 1; Rosenborg 3 Brann 0.
Apr 15: Molde 3 Stromsgodset 2; Sandefjord 0 Valerenga 1.
Apr 17: Honefoss 0 Viking 1.
Apr 18: Odd Grenland 1 Molde 1; Stromsgodset 3 Start 1; Stabaek 4 Kongsvinger 2; Lillestrom 1 Haugesund 1; Brann 1 Valerenga 1.
Apr 19: Aalesund 1 Rosenborg 1.
Apr 21: Tromso 2 Sandefjord 1; Stabaek 0 Honefoss 1.
Apr 24: Viking 2 Stabaek 0.
Apr 25: Haugesund 3 Kongsvinger 0; Valerenga 6 Odd Grenland 1; Brann 4 Stromsgodset 0; Start 2 Honefoss 0; Sandefjord 0 Aalesund 1; Rosenborg 0 Lillestrom 0.
Apr 26: Molde 2 Tromso 3.
May 1: Stromsgodset 1 Valerenga 0.
May 2: Odd Grenland 0 Brann 0; Kongsvinger 1 Viking 1; Honefoss 1 Molde 1; Stabaek 0 Haugesund 0; Lillestrom 4 Sandefjord 0; Tromso 0 Rosenborg 0.
May 3: Aalesund 2 Start 0.
May 5: Valerenga 0 Honefoss 0; Rosenborg 2 Stabaek 0; Viking 1 Haugesund 0; Brann 0 Tromso 1; Stromsgodset 0 Odd Grenland 4; Sandefjord 0 Kongsvinger 1.
May 6: Start 2 Lillestrom 3; Molde 2 Aalesund 1.
May 8: Kongsvinger 1 Valerenga 2.
May 9: Lillestrom 3 Stromsgodset 1; Tromso 1 Start 0; Honefoss 1 Sandefjord 0; Haugesund 0 Rosenborg 0; Aalesund 2 Odd Grenland 3; Stabaek 2 Brann 1.
May 10: Viking 4 Molde 1.
May 16: Molde 2 Haugesund 1; Valerenga 3 Aalesund 0; Sandefjord 0 Viking 0; Start 3 Kongsvinger 0; Stromsgodset 1 Stabaek 3; Rosenborg 3 Honefoss 0; Odd Grenland 1 Tromso 1; Brann 1 Lillestrom 1.
May 24: Stabaek 3 Start 0; Tromso 2 Valerenga 1; Honefoss 2 Brann 0; Kongsvinger 3 Molde 1; Haugesund 2 Sandefjord 0; Aalesund 3 Stromsgodset 1; Viking 1 Rosenborg 2.
May 25: Lillestrom 2 Odd Grenland 2.

NORWAY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tromso	13	9	3	1	17	8	30
Rosenborg	13	7	6	0	22	7	27
Aalesund	13	7	2	4	23	16	23
Lillestrom	13	5	7	1	22	10	22
Valerenga	13	6	4	3	22	13	22
Viking	13	5	4	4	17	12	19
Stabaek	13	5	4	4	18	15	19
Start	13	5	3	5	24	23	18
Odd Grenland	13	4	6	3	23	22	18
Haugesund	13	4	5	4	17	14	17
Stromsgodset	13	5	1	7	19	29	16
Molde	13	4	3	6	20	26	15
Kongsvinger	13	3	2	8	12	22	11
Honefoss	13	3	2	8	7	24	11
Brann	13	2	4	7	15	23	10
Sandefjord	13	1	2	10	9	23	5

POLAND

Mar 31: Arka 2 Polonia Bytom 2.
Apr 1: Cracovia 0 Jagiellonia 1; Belchatow 3 Odra 0.
Apr 3: Piast 1 Korona 0; Polonia Warsaw 0 Wisla 1; Zaglebie 2 Lechia 2; Lech 1 Legia 0; Ruch 0 Slask 0.
Apr 9: Zaglebie 0 Cracovia 0; Lech 2 Arka 0.
Apr 18: Piast 0 Polonia W 2; Legia 2 Jagiellonia 1.
Apr 20: Lechia 0 Polonia Bytom 0; Ruch 3 Odra 2; Wisla 1 Slask 0; Korona 1 Belchatow 1.
Apr 23: Arka 1 Korona 2; Legia 3 Piast 0.
Apr 24: Polonia Bytom 1 Cracovia 2; Jagiellonia 0 Zaglebie 0; Wisla 0 Lech 0; Slask 0 Belchatow 0; Odra 2 Polonia Warsaw 1.
Apr 25: Lechia 1 Ruch 1.
Apr 26: Korona 0 Legia 1.
Apr 27: Cracovia 1 Odra 0; Polonia Warsaw 0 Belchatow 0; Piast 1 Wisla 4; Zaglebie 1 Slask 1.
Apr 28: Ruch 2 Polonia Bytom 1; Lech 2 Lechia 1; Jagiellonia 2 Arka 1.
Apr 30: Belchatow 3 Cracovia 0; Wisla 0 Korona 1.
May 1: Lechia 0 Piast 1; Odra 2 Arka 1; Ruch 1 Legia 0; Polonia Warsaw 2 Jagiellonia 0.
May 2: Polonia Bytom 2 Zaglebie 1; Slask 0 Lech 3.
May 6: Arka 2 Belchatow 1.
May 7: Cracovia 1 Polonia W 2; Jagiellonia 1 Ruch 0.
May 8: Piast 2 Slask 2; Legia 0 Wisla 3; Zaglebie 2 Odra 1; Lech 3 Polonia Bytom 0; Korona 1 Lechia 0.
May 11: Polonia Warsaw 1 Legia 0; Odra 2 Slask 4; Arka 2 Piast 1; Cracovia 1 Wisla 1; Belchatow 2 Lechia 1; Zaglebie 2 Korona 2; Ruch 1 Lech 2; Jagiellonia 0 Polonia Bytom 0.
May 15: Polonia Bytom 1 Polonia Warsaw 0; Wisla 1 Odra 1; Lech 2 Zaglebie 0; Lechia 2 Jagiellonia 0; Legia 2 Belchatow 2; Slask 2 Arka 1; Piast 0 Cracovia 1; Korona 3 Ruch 0.

POLAND – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lech	30	19	8	3	51	20	65
Wisla	30	19	5	6	48	20	62
Ruch	30	16	5	9	40	30	53
Legia	30	15	7	8	36	22	52
Belchatow	30	13	9	8	37	27	48
Korona	30	9	10	11	35	41	37
Polonia B	30	9	10	11	29	31	37
Lechia	30	9	10	11	30	32	37
Slask	30	8	12	10	32	33	36
Zaglebie	30	8	11	11	30	38	35
Jagiellonia*	30	11	11	8	29	27	34
Cracovia	30	9	7	14	25	39	34
Polonia W	30	9	6	15	25	38	33
Arka	30	7	7	16	28	39	28
Odra (R)	30	7	6	17	27	45	27
Piast (R)	30	7	6	17	30	50	27

**10pts deducted for involvement in corruption scandal*

Promoted: *Widzew Lodz, Gornik Zabrze*

ROMANIA

Rapid change

Having led Rapid Bucharest for the second half of last season, Ioan Andone has replaced Cornel Talnar and returned to coach city rivals Dinamo for a second time.

Red Star Belgrade's Vladimir Petrovic replaced Ioan Sabau at Timisoara, while Marius Lacatus left Romanian Cup runners-up Vaslui.

RUSSIA

Keeper suspended

CSKA Moscow goalkeeper Artur Nigmatullin has been banned by UEFA until the end of the year for a breach of anti-doping regulations.

The Russia Under-19's ban follows that of CSKA defenders Sergei Ignashevich and Alexei Berezutsky who were suspended for one game after they both contravened doping regulations at a Champions League game against Manchester United last November.

Duo...McCoist (left) and Smith

SCOTLAND

Gers look to future

Assistant manager Ally McCoist will take over from Rangers manager Walter Smith at the end of next season. The 47-year-old is the club's all-time record goalscorer, having found the net 355 times in a 15-year Ibrox playing career that ended in 1998.

Elsewhere, managers Jimmy Calderwood and Gus MacPherson have left Kilmarnock and St Mirren respectively. MacPherson, who took St Mirren to the Final of this year's Scottish League Cup, had been the club's longest-serving boss since the Second World War.

POLISH CUP

Final

May 22 - Zdzislaw Krzyszkowiak stadium, Bydgoszcz
Jagiellonia 1 (Skerla 49)
Pogon 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 13,300. **Ref:** Malek

PORTUGAL

Apr 2: Sporting Braga 3 Guimaraes 2; Nacional 1 Leixoes 0; Sporting Lisbon 5 Rio Ave 0.
Apr 3: Olhanense 2 Setubal 2; Pacos Ferreira 0 Belenenses 0; Academica 0 Uniao Leiria 0; Porto 4 Maritimo 1.
Apr 5: Naval 2 Benfica 4.
Apr 9: Naval 0 Nacional 0.
Apr 10: Uniao Leiria 1 Braga 2; Rio Ave 0 Porto 1.
Apr 11: Leixoes 2 Pacos Ferreira 0; Maritimo 3 Belenenses 3; Guimaraes 1 Olhanense 1.
Apr 12: Setubal 1 Academica 1.
Apr 13: Benfica 2 Sporting Lisbon 0.
Apr 16: Olhanense 1 Maritimo 2.
Apr 17: Pacos Ferreira 1 Naval 3; Sporting Braga 3 Leixoes 1.
Apr 18: Belenenses 0 Rio Ave 0; Nacional 2 Uniao Leiria 0; Academica 2 Benfica 3; Porto 3 Guimaraes 0.
Apr 19: Sporting Lisbon 2 Setubal 1.
Apr 23: Rio Ave 0 Maritimo 0.
Apr 24: Setubal 2 Porto 5; Benfica 5 Olhanense 0.
Apr 25: Nacional 1 Pacos Ferreira 1; Leixoes 1 Academica 3; Naval 0 Sporting Braga 4; Uniao Leiria 1 Sporting Lisbon 1.
Apr 26: Guimaraes 2 Belenenses 0.
May 2: Sporting Lisbon 0 Naval 1; Academica 3 Nacional 3; Braga 1 Pacos Ferreira 0; Olhanense 1 Leixoes 0; Porto 3 Benfica 1; Rio Ave 0 Guimaraes 0; Maritimo 2 Setubal 0; Belenenses 5 Uniao Leiria 2.
May 9: Setubal 1 Belenenses 2; Benfica 2 Rio Ave 1; Uniao Leiria 1 Porto 4; Guimaraes 1 Maritimo 2; Leixoes 1 Sporting Lisbon 2; Nacional 1 Braga 1; Naval 0 Academica 1; Pacos Ferreira 2 Olhanense 2.

PORTUGAL – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Benfica	30	24	4	2	78	20	76
S Braga	30	22	5	3	48	20	71
Porto	30	21	5	4	70	26	68
Sporting L	30	13	9	8	42	26	48
Maritimo	30	11	8	11	42	43	41
Guimaraes	30	11	8	11	31	34	41
Nacional	30	10	9	11	36	46	39
Naval	30	10	6	14	20	35	36
Uniao Leiria	30	9	8	13	35	41	35
P Ferreira	30	8	11	11	32	37	35
Academica	30	8	9	13	37	42	33
Rio Ave	30	6	13	11	22	33	31
Olhanense	30	5	14	11	31	46	29
Setubal	30	5	10	15	29	57	25
Belenenses (R)	30	4	11	15	23	44	23
Leixoes (R)	30	5	6	19	25	51	21

TOP GOALSCORERS
26 Oscar Cardozo (Benfica)
25 Radamel Falcao (Porto)
13 Liedson (Sporting Lisbon)

Promoted: *Beira Mar, Portimonense*

PORTUGUESE CUP

Final

May 16 - National stadium, Lisbon
Chaves 1 (Clemente 86)
Porto 2 (Guarin 13, Falcao 23)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Proenca
Sent off: Ricardo Rocha (Chaves) 90min; Bruno Alves (Porto) 90min

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dundalk	16	8	4	4	22	15	28
St Patrick's	15	8	3	4	21	8	27
Shamrock	16	7	6	3	16	12	27
Fingal	15	6	7	2	19	12	25
Bohemians	15	7	4	4	18	13	25
UCD	15	6	5	4	20	13	23
Sligo	15	4	7	4	23	15	19
Galway	16	4	5	7	14	19	17
Drogheda	16	2	5	9	15	36	11
Bray	15	1	2	12	10	35	5

Standings on June 3

ROMANIA

Apr 2: Otelul 1 Pandurii 1; Astra 0 Urziceni 2; Ceahlaul 1 Politehnica 0; Steaua 1 Brasov 0; Dinamo 1 Gaz Metan 0.
Apr 3: International 1 Rapid 2; Universitatea 1 Timisoara 2; Vaslui 3 Alba Iulia 0; CFR 1 Gloria 0.
Apr 6: Brasov 3 Otelul 0.
Apr 7: Urziceni 1 Gaz Metan 1; Alba Iulia 2 Universitatea 0; Astra 0 Vaslui 0; Timisoara 0 International 0; Gloria 1 Steaua 2.
Apr 8: Rapid 1 Ceahlaul 1; Politehnica 0 CFR 2; Pandurii 0 Dinamo 0.
Apr 10: Otelul 3 Gloria 0; Universitatea 1 Astra 0; International 2 Alba Iulia 1; Vaslui 1 Urziceni 1.
Apr 11: Gaz Metan 1 Pandurii 0; Ceahlaul 1 Timisoara 1; Dinamo 0 Brasov 0; CFR 1 Rapid 0.
Apr 12: Steaua 2 Politehnica 1.
Apr 16: Alba Iulia 3 Ceahlaul 2; Astra 1 International 1; Urziceni 3 Pandurii 0.
Apr 17: Gloria 3 Dinamo 2.
Apr 18: Politehnica 1 Otelul 1; Brasov 3 Gaz Metan 2; Rapid 5 Steaua 1.
Apr 19: Vaslui 0 Universitatea 1; Timisoara 1 CFR 1.
Apr 23: Ceahlaul 0 Astra 0; Dinamo 1 Politehnica 1.
Apr 24: Pandurii 1 Brasov 0; Otelul 0 Rapid 0; CFR 3 Alba Iulia 2.
Apr 25: Gaz Metan 1 Gloria 1; Universitatea 1 Urziceni 4; Steaua 3 Timisoara 3.
Apr 26: International 1 Vaslui 2.
Apr 30: Gloria 1 Pandurii 0; Astra 1 CFR 0.
May 1: Universitatea 1 International 3; Alba Iulia 2 Steaua 1; Timisoara 2 Otelul 1; Vaslui 1 Ceahlaul 0.
May 2: Politehnica 1 Gaz Metan 1; Urziceni 1 Brasov 0; Rapid 2 Dinamo 2.
May 5: Ceahlaul 2 Universitatea 1; Pandurii 1 Politehnica 1; Gaz Metan 0 Rapid 0; Steaua 2 Astra 0.
May 6: Otelul 1 Alba Iulia 0; Brasov 6 Gloria 0; CFR 0 Vaslui 0; Urziceni 1 International 0; Dinamo 1 Timisoara 2.
May 9: International 2 Ceahlaul 0; Astra 0 Otelul 3.
May 10: Alba Iulia 1 Dinamo 2; Universitatea 2 CFR 3; Timisoara 0 Gaz Metan 2; Vaslui 2 Steaua 1; Rapid 1 Pandurii 0.
May 11: Politehnica 0 Brasov 0; Gloria 0 Urziceni 0.
May 15: CFR 2 International 1; Gaz Metan 5 Alba Iulia 0.
May 16: Brasov 1 Rapid 1; Dinamo 3 Astra 3; Steaua 2 Universitatea 0; Gloria 5 Politehnica 0.
May 17: Otelul 1 Vaslui 0; Urziceni 4 Ceahlaul 0; Pandurii 0 Timisoara 0.
May 22: Ceahlaul 2 CFR 4; Universitatea 3 Otelul 0; International 0 Steaua 2; Politehnica 1 Urziceni 2; Timisoara 1 Brasov 2; Rapid 2 Gloria 1; Alba Iulia 0 Pandurii 1; Astra 0 Gaz Metan 0; Vaslui 2 Dinamo 0.

ROMANIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CFR	34	20	9	5	46	23	69
Urziceni	34	18	12	4	53	26	66
Vaslui	34	18	8	8	44	28	62
Steaua	34	18	8	8	49	36	62
Timisoara	34	15	14	5	55	27	59
Dinamo	34	13	14	7	48	37	53
Rapid	34	14	10	10	53	38	52
Otelul	34	14	8	12	38	38	50
Brasov	34	12	10	12	40	30	46
Gaz Metan	34	9	15	10	33	37	42
Gloria	34	10	11	13	35	46	41
International	34	10	6	18	32	49	36
Universitatea	34	11	3	20	44	52	36
Astra	34	8	12	14	33	45	36
Pandurii (R)	34	7	13	14	19	30	34
Politehnica (R)	34	7	10	17	28	50	31
Ceahlaul (R)	34	6	10	18	28	57	28
Alba Iulia (R)	34	7	5	22	33	62	26

TOP GOALSCORERS
16 Andrei Cristea (Dinamo)
15 Pantelis Kapetanos (Steaua)

Promoted: *Victoria Branesti, Sportul Studentesc (plus two others – 2nd level fixtures not completed by press time)*

ROMANIAN CUP

Final

May 26 - Emil Alexandrescu stadium, Iasi
Vaslui 0
CFR 0
Aet. **Ref:** Deaconu
CFR 5-4 on pens

RUSSIA

Apr 3: Amkar 3 Sibir 1; Anzhi 2 Alania 0; Spartak Nalchik 5 Rostov 2.
Apr 4: Tom 2 Spartak Moscow 2; Terek 2 Krylia Sovetov 0; Saturn 0 Rubin 0; Lokomotiv 3 Dynamo 2.
Apr 10: Krylia Sovetov 2 Saturn 1; Spartak Moscow 2 Terek 1; Dynamo 0 Tom 0.
Apr 11: Sibir 2 Anzhi 4; Zenit 1 Lokomotiv 0; Alania 1 CSKA 3; Rostov 2 Amkar 1.
Apr 12: Rubin 1 Spartak Nalchik 1.
Apr 17: Tom 0 Zenit 0; CSKA 1 Lokomotiv 1; Amkar 0 Rubin 1; Alania 2 Sibir 1.
Apr 18: Terek 1 Dynamo 1; Saturn 0 Spartak Moscow 0; Spartak Nalchik 1 Krylia Sovetov 0.
Apr 19: Anzhi 1 Rostov 2.
Apr 24: Sibir 1 CSKA 4; Dynamo 1 Saturn 0; Lokomotiv 2 Tom 1.
Apr 25: Spartak Moscow 0 Spartak Nalchik 0; Zenit 0 Terek 0; Rubin 0 Anzhi 0; Rostov 0 Alania 1.
Apr 26: Krylia Sovetov 1 Amkar 1.
Apr 28: CSKA 0 Zenit 2.
Apr 30: Anzhi 0 Krylia Sovetov 0.
May 1: Terek 0 Lokomotiv 0; S Nalchik 1 Dynamo 0.
May 2: Sibir 2 Rostov 0; Saturn 0 Zenit 1; CSKA 3 Tom 1; Alania 1 Rubin 1; Amkar 0 Spartak Moscow 2.
May 5: Krylia Sovetov 1 Alania 0; Dynamo 1 Amkar 1; Lokomotiv 0 Saturn 1.
May 6: Rostov 1 CSKA 0; Spartak Moscow 3 Anzhi 0; Zenit 3 Spartak Nalchik 1; Rubin 1 Sibir 0; Tom 2 Terek 1.
May 10: Rostov 0 Rubin 2; Alania 5 Spartak Moscow 2; Amkar 0 Zenit 2; Sibir 4 Krylia Sovetov 1; CSKA 4 Terek 1.
May 11: Spartak Nalchik 1 Lokomotiv 1; Saturn 1 Tom 2; Anzhi 1 Dynamo 1.
May 14: Rubin 0 CSKA 1; Terek 2 Saturn 0; Krylia Sovetov 1 Rostov 2.
May 15: Dynamo 2 Alania 0; Lokomotiv 2 Amkar 0; Tom 1 Spartak Nalchik 0.

RUSSIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zenit	10	7	3	0	13	3	24
CSKA	11	7	2	2	19	9	23
Rubin	11	5	5	1	9	3	20
Spartak N	11	5	4	2	14	9	19
Tom	11	5	3	3	14	12	18
Rostov	11	5	1	5	11	16	16
Spartak M	10	4	4	2	14	11	16
Lokomotiv	11	4	3	4	13	11	15
Dynamo	11	3	5	3	10	9	14
Terek	11	3	5	3	11	10	14
Alania	11	3	3	5	12	15	12
Anzhi	10	2	4	4	9	11	10
Amkar	11	2	3	6	7	13	9
Krylia Sovetov	11	2	2	7	8	18	8
Sibir	10	2	1	7	12	20	7
Saturn	11	1	4	6	5	11	7

RUSSIAN CUP

Final

May 16 - Olimp-2 stadium, Rostov-on-Don
Zenit 1 (Shirokov pen 60)
Sibir 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 15,400. **Ref:** Kolobaev

SAN MARINO

CHAMPIONSHIP

Final

May 31 - Olympic stadium, Serravalle
Tre Penne 1 (Palazzi 80)
Tre Fiori 2 (Aruta 18, 103)
Aet. **HT:** 0-1. **90mins:** 1-1
Sent off: Valli (Tre Penne)

SAN MARINO CUP

Final

Apr 29 - Olympic stadium, Serravalle
Tre Penne 1 (Valli 14)
Tre Fiori 2 (Giunta 61, Aruta 95)
Aet. **HT:** 1-0. **90mins:** 1-1. **Ref:** Rossi
Sent off: (from bench) Tarini (Tre Fiori) 107min

SCOTLAND

Regular season

Mar 30: St Johnstone 4 Rangers 1.
Mar 31: Hibernian 2 Dundee United 4.
Apr 3: St Mirren 1 Hearts 1; Rangers 1 Hamilton 0; Motherwell 0 Falkirk 1.
Apr 4: Hibernian 0 Celtic 1; Kilmarnock 2 Aberdeen 0.
Apr 5: St Johnstone 0 Dundee United 1.
Apr 7: Rangers 3 Aberdeen 1.
Apr 10: Hearts 1 Kilmarnock 0; Hamilton 4 Hibernian 1; Falkirk 2 St Mirren 1.
Apr 11: Aberdeen 1 St Johnstone 3.
Apr 13: Celtic 2 Motherwell 1.
Apr 14: Dundee United 0 Rangers 0.

SCOTLAND – REGULAR – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	33	23	8	2	73	22	77
Celtic	33	20	6	7	62	35	66
Dundee Utd	33	16	11	6	51	39	59
Hibernian	33	14	8	11	47	43	50
Motherwell	33	12	12	9	39	38	48
Hearts	33	12	8	13	32	39	44
St Johnstone	33	11	8	14	50	54	41
Hamilton	33	9	9	15	29	43	36
Aberdeen	33	8	10	15	31	46	34
Kilmarnock	33	7	8	18	26	44	29
St Mirren	33	6	10	17	32	45	28
Falkirk	33	6	10	17	30	54	28

Top six entered championship group; bottom six entered relegation group

SLOVAKIA

Zilina crowned

Zilina won their fifth league title in eight years and will enter the 2010-11 Champions League in the second qualifying round.

Runners-up Slovan Bratislava and third-placed Dukla Banska Bystrica will compete in the Europa League, qualifying along with Spartak Trnava, who lost 6-0 to Slovan in the Slovakian Cup Final.

Petrzalka, who had participated in the Champions League group stage in 2005-06 as Artmedia, were relegated from the top flight.

SWITZERLAND

Transfer ban

Sion have been banned from signing players for the next two transfer windows after

3 coaches used by Serb champions Partizan last season, despite not losing a game in the league

Costly...El Hadary's move to Sion had repercussions

Championship group

Apr 17: Celtic 3 Hibernian 2.
Apr 18: Rangers 2 Hearts 0; Motherwell 2 Dundee United 3.
Apr 24: Hearts 0 Motherwell 2.
Apr 25: Dundee United 0 Celtic 2; Hibernian 0 Rangers 1.
May 1: Hibernian 1 Hearts 2; Celtic 4 Motherwell 0; Dundee United 1 Rangers 2.
May 4: Celtic 2 Rangers 1.
May 5: Hearts 0 Dundee United 0; Motherwell 6 Hibernian 6.
May 9: Dundee United 0 Hibernian 2; Hearts 1 Celtic 2; Rangers 3 Motherwell 3.

SCOTLAND – CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	38	26	9	3	82	28	87
Celtic	38	25	6	7	75	39	81
Dundee Utd	38	17	12	9	55	47	63
Hibernian	38	15	9	14	58	55	54
Motherwell	38	13	14	11	52	54	53
Hearts	38	13	9	16	35	46	48

Teams carried forward full record from regular season

Relegation group

Apr 17: Aberdeen 1 Falkirk 0; Hamilton 3 Kilmarnock 0; St Johnstone 2 St Mirren 2.
Apr 24: St Johnstone 1 Aberdeen 1; Falkirk 0 Hamilton 1; St Mirren 1 Kilmarnock 0.
May 1: Aberdeen 1 Hamilton 3; Falkirk 1 St Mirren 1; Kilmarnock 1 St Johnstone 2.
May 5: Hamilton 0 St Mirren 0; Aberdeen 1 Kilmarnock 2; Falkirk 0 St Johnstone 0.
May 8: Kilmarnock 0 Falkirk 0; St Johnstone 2 Hamilton 3; St Mirren 0 Aberdeen 1.

SCOTLAND – RELEGATION GROUP – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hamilton	38	13	10	15	39	46	49
St Johnstone	38	12	11	15	57	61	47
Aberdeen	38	10	11	17	36	52	41
St Mirren	38	7	13	18	36	49	34
Kilmarnock	38	8	9	21	29	51	33
Falkirk (R)	38	6	13	19	31	57	31

Teams carried forward full record from regular season

TOP GOALSCORERS
23 Kris Boyd (Rangers)
21 Anthony Stokes (Hibernian)
18 Kenny Miller (Rangers)

Promoted: *Inverness Caledonian Thistle*

SCOTTISH CUP

Final

May 15 - Hampden Park, Glasgow
Dundee United 3 (Goodwillie 61, Conway 75, 86)
Ross County 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 47,122. **Ref:** McDonald

SERBIA

Apr 3: Javor 1 Napredak 0; Vojvodina 2 BSK 0; OFK 0 Red Star 2; Mladi Radnik 0 Smederevo 0; Borac 1 Metalac 0; Hajduk 2 Rad 1; Cukaricki 2 Jagodina 1; Partizan 2 Spartak 0.
Apr 10: Smederevo 0 Borac 0; Spartak 2 BSK 1; Metalac 1 Javor 0; Napredak 2 Hajduk 0; Red Star 4 Mladi Radnik 1.
Apr 11: OFK 2 Vojvodina 2; Rad 2 Cukaricki 0; Jagodina 0 Partizan 0.
Apr 17: Javor 1 Smederevo 0; Borac 0 Red Star 0; BSK 1 Jagodina 4; Mladi Radnik 0 OFK 2; Cukaricki 2 Napredak 1; Hajduk 1 Metalac 1.
Apr 18: Vojvodina 0 Spartak 1; Partizan 2 Rad 1.
Apr 21: Jagodina 3 Spartak 1; Rad 2 BSK 0; Napredak 0 Partizan 1; OFK 3 Borac 2; Smederevo 0 Hajduk 0; Mladi Radnik 1 Vojvodina 3; Metalac 0 Cukaricki 1; Red Star 0 Javor 1.
Apr 24: Spartak 1 Rad 0; BSK 1 Napredak 1; Javor 0 OFK 1; Borac 1 Mladi Radnik 0; Vojvodina 4 Jagodina 1; Partizan 3 Metalac 1.
Apr 25: Hajduk 0 Red Star 1; Cukaricki 0 Smederevo 0.
May 1: OFK 2 Hajduk 1; Red Star 4 Cukaricki 0; Smederevo 0 Partizan 2; Metalac 1 BSK 3; Napredak 2 Spartak 3; Borac 0 Vojvodina 0; Mladi Radnik 1 Javor 0.
May 2: Rad 1 Jagodina 0.
May 8: Spartak 0 Metalac 0; BSK 0 Smederevo 0; Partizan 1 Red Star 0; Cukaricki 0 OFK 0; Javor 1 Borac 1; Vojvodina 2 Rad 3; Jagodina 1 Napredak 1.
May 9: Hajduk 2 Mladi Radnik 0.
May 13: Mladi Radnik 1 Cukaricki 4; Metalac 2 Jagodina 3; OFK 0 Partizan 3; Smederevo 2 Spartak 0; Borac 1 Hajduk 1; Napredak 2 Rad 1; Javor 1 Vojvodina 1; Red Star 1 BSK 3.
May 16: Jagodina 2 Smederevo 0; Spartak 0 Red Star 1; BSK 1 OFK 0; Partizan 6 Mladi Radnik 0; Cukaricki 1 Borac 0; Hajduk 1 Javor 1; Vojvodina 7 Napredak 0; Rad 3 Metalac 0.

SERBIA – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Partizan	30	24	6	0	63	14	78
Red Star	30	23	2	5	53	17	71
OFK	30	15	5	10	38	33	50
Spartak	30	14	7	9	34	27	49
Vojvodina	30	13	6	11	51	30	45
Jagodina	30	12	7	11	38	34	43
Javor	30	8	14	8	22	23	38
Rad	30	10	7	13	38	39	37
Metalac	30	10	5	15	24	39	35
Smederevo	30	8	10	12	23	30	34
Borac	30	9	7	14	21	34	34
BSK	30	9	6	15	27	37	33
Cukaricki	30	9	5	16	25	46	32
Hajduk	30	7	9	14	28	40	30
Napredak (R)	30	7	8	15	30	44	29
M Radnik (R)	30	5	10	15	19	47	25

Promoted: *Indjija, Sevojno*

SERBIAN CUP

Final

May 5 - Partizan stadium, Belgrade
Red Star 3 (Jevtic 14, Cadu 62, Trifunovic 72)
Vojvodina 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 21,000. **Ref:** Stankovic

SLOVAKIA

SLOVAKIA – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zilina	33	23	4	6	59	17	73
Slovan	33	21	7	5	54	24	70
Dukla	33	15	11	7	45	30	56
Nitra	33	14	6	13	42	40	48
Ruzomberok	33	13	8	12	33	35	47
Senica	33	12	7	14	34	44	43
Spartak	33	12	5	16	52	46	41
Tatran	33	11	5	17	32	38	38
Dubnica	33	8	12	13	27	42	36
DAC	33	7	12	14	28	47	33
Kosice	33	8	9	16	32	57	33
Petrzalka (R)	33	7	8	18	33	51	29

Promoted: *Zlate Moravce*

SLOVAKIAN CUP

Final

May 11 - Michalovsky stadium, Michalovce
Slovan 6 (Salata 11, Bozic 17, Sylvestr 33, Breznanik 64, Guede 67, Dobrotka 87)
Spartak 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 3,752. **Ref:** Vlk

SLOVENIA

SLOVENIA – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Koper	36	21	10	5	59	35	73
Maribor	36	18	8	10	58	44	62
Gorica	36	16	7	13	74	60	55
Olimpija*	36	16	7	13	51	33	53
Celje	36	14	9	13	53	56	51
Nafta	36	14	7	15	51	53	49
Rudar	36	15	4	17	46	52	49
Domzale	36	12	9	15	51	59	45
Interblock (R**)	36	9	6	21	35	64	33
Drava (R)	36	7	9	20	34	56	30

**2pts deducted for missing a game last season*
***Relegated after play-off*

Promoted: *Primorje, Triglav*

SLOVENIAN CUP

Final

May 8 - Ljudski vrt stadium, Maribor
Maribor 3 (Tavares 42, 55, Bunderla 120)
Domzale 2 (Brezovacki 31, Pekic 45)
Aet. **HT:** 1-2. **90mins:** 2-2. **Att:** 6,500. **Ref:** Skomina

SPAIN

Saturday, April 3

Barcelona 4 (Jeffren 27, Bojan 40, 59, Messi 67)
Athletic Bilbao 1 (Susaeta 77) Att: 77,630

Sevilla 3 (Kanoute 22, Luis Fabiano 44, Jose Carlos 87)
Tenerife 0 Att: 30,000

Zaragoza 2 (Ponzio 45, Suazo 76)
Malaga 0 Att: 25,000

Sunday, April 4

Almeria 1 (Uche 5)
Mallorca 1 (Webo 88) Att: 9,574

Atletico Madrid 3 (Juanito 22, Forlan 57, Tiago 61)
Deportivo La Coruna 0 Att: 35,000

Getafe 1 (Manu 28)
Espanyol 1 (Osvaldo 52) Att: 10,000

Racing Santander 0
Real Madrid 2 (Cristiano Ronaldo pen 23, Higuain 76) Att: 22,271

Sporting Gijon 2 (Rivera 13, De las Cuevas 57)
Xerez 2 (Bermejo 52, Alustiza 79) Att: 20,000

Valencia 3 (Joaquin 48, Villa 89, pen 90)
Osasuna 0 Att: 30,000

Valladolid 0
Villarreal 2 (Angel 9, Nilmar 59) Att: 13,000

Saturday, April 10

Malaga 1 (Caicedo 17)
Sevilla 2 (Cala 66, Lolo 85) Att: 27,000

Real Madrid 0
Barcelona 2 (Messi 33, Pedro 56) Att: 80,000

Tenerife 0
Valladolid 0 Att: 15,801

Villarreal 1 (Godin 16)
Sporting Gijon 0 Att: 12,000

Xerez 0
Getafe 1 (Rafa 60) Att: 16,674

Sunday, April 11

Athletic Bilbao 4 (Javi Martinez 13, 49, Gabilondo 32, Llorente 51)
Almeria 1 (Piatti 71) Att: 36,000

Deportivo La Coruna 1 (Riki 1)
Racing Santander 1 (Toni Moral 84) Att: 18,000

Espanyol 3 (Victor Ruiz 47, Osvaldo 67, Ivan Alonso 90)
Atletico Madrid 0 Att: 32,620

Mallorca 3 (Castro 7, Webo 22, Fernandes og 63)
Valencia 2 (Jordi Alba 46, Pablo 86) Att: 14,000

Osasuna 2 (Aranda 2, Vadocz 90)
Zaragoza 0 Att: 17,601

Tuesday, April 13

Getafe 3 (Miku 56, 86, Mane 72)
Villarreal 0 Att: 6,000

Sporting Gijon 0
Tenerife 2 (Roman 70, Alfaro 87) Att: 17,000

Valladolid 2 (Diego Costa 42, Manucho 54)
Sevilla 1 (Cala 83) Att: 18,000

Wednesday, April 14

Atletico Madrid 1 (Forlan 12)
Xerez 2 (Bermejo 9, Armenteros 72) Att: 20,000

Barcelona 3 (Bojan 16, Pedro 69, Toure 72)
Deportivo La Coruna 0 Att: 75,897

Osasuna 2 (Pandiani 10, 48)
Malaga 2 (Caicedo 31, Baha 76) Att: 15,532

Racing Santander 3 (Tchite pen 37, pen 51, Arana 90)
Espanyol 1 (Ivan Alonso 33) Att: 14,171

Zaragoza 1 (Suazo 22)
Mallorca 1 (Ruben 13) Att: 25,000

Thursday, April 15

Almeria 1 (Crusat 14)
Real Madrid 2 (Cristiano Ronaldo 27, Van der Vaart 69) Att: 11,500

Valencia 2 (Silva 35, 62)
Athletic Bilbao 0 Att: 35,000

Saturday, April 17

Espanyol 0
Barcelona 0 Att: 40,000

Sevilla 3 (Kanoute 8, Luis Fabiano 53, Cala 84)
Sporting Gijon 0 Att: 30,000

Villarreal 2 (Godin 21, Rossi 44)
Atletico Madrid 1 (Aguero 64) Att: 12,000

Sunday, April 18

Athletic Bilbao 0
Zaragoza 0 Att: 34,000

Egypt goalkeeper Essam El Hadary breached his contract with former club Al Ahli to join the Swiss club in February 2008. The 37-year-old returned to his homeland and joined Ismaily in July 2009.

TURKEY

Shota's big break

Georgia's record goalscorer Shota Arveladze, who was on target 26 times in 60 internationals, has taken up his first coaching post with a job at Kayserispor.

"Sporting director Suleyman Hurma has known me for quite a while because he was at Trabzonspor when I played there," said Arveladze.

"I played with Kayserispor's coach Tolunay Kafkas and when he left for Gaziantepspor, he recommended me to them as his replacement."

Keen...Arveladze

UKRAINE

Argentinian star

Dynamo Kyiv have signed 19-year-old Argentina midfielder Facundo Bertoglio on a five-year deal from Colon.

He only made his league debut in South America 12 months ago, but he won his first cap in the 4-0 win against Haiti in May and scored twice – though he did not make the World Cup squad.

New boy...Bertoglio (left)

Deportivo La Coruna 0
Almeria 0 Att: 12,000

Malaga 0
Valladolid 0 Att: 23,000

Real Madrid 2 (Higuain 25, Cristiano Ronaldo 78)
Valencia 0 Att: 70,000

Tenerife 3 (Nino 30, 69, 76)
Getafe 2 (Pedro Leon 11, Casquero 75) Att: 18,996

Xerez 2 (Orellana 6, Victor Sanchez 73)
Racing Santander 2 (Tchite 44, pen 58) Att: 18,000

Monday, April 19

Mallorca 2 (Ruben 36, Keita 90)
Osasuna 0 Att: 11,380

Saturday, April 24

Barcelona 3 (Jeffren 14, Henry 24, Ibrahimovic 56)
Xerez 1 (Bermejo 25) Att: 82,456

Valencia 1 (Villa pen 34)
Deportivo La Coruna 0 Att: 40,000

Zaragoza 1 (Colunga 61)
Real Madrid 2 (Raul 50, Kaka 82) Att: 32,000

Sunday, April 25

Almeria 0
Espanyol 1 (Luis Garcia 55) Att: 16,000

Atletico Madrid 3 (Salvio 10, 31, Aguero 78)
Tenerife 1 (Roman 61) Att: 48,000

Getafe 4 (Adrian Gonzalez 17, Pedro Leon 58, Manu 75, Parejo pen 90)
Sevilla 3 (Luis Fabiano 33, 61, Kanoute 38) Att: 10,000

Mallorca 1 (Aduriz 90)
Malaga 1 (Obinna 86) Att: 13,200

Racing Santander 1 (Canales 39)
Villarreal 2 (Godin 70, Nilmar 82) Att: 16,781

Sporting Gijon 0
Valladolid 2 (Manucho 80, Baraja 90) Att: 24,500

Monday, April 26

Osasuna 0
Athletic Bilbao 0 Att: 18,215

Saturday, May 1

Deportivo La Coruna 0
Zaragoza 1 (Colunga 50) Att: 13,000

Espanyol 0
Valencia 2 (Zigic 61, 74) Att: 30,029

Malaga 1 (Caicedo 79)
Sporting Gijon 1 (Apono og 43) Att: 30,000

Tenerife 2 (Roman 45, Ayoze pen 56)
Racing Santander 1 (Xisco 71) Att: 18,000

Valladolid 0
Getafe 0 Att: 24,798

Villarreal 1 (Llorente 67)
Barcelona 4 (Messi 19, 88, Xavi 34, Bojan 42) Att: 23,000

Xerez 2 (Armenteros 27, Bermejo 90)
Almeria 1 (Soriano 34) Att: 14,000

Sunday, May 2

Athletic Bilbao 1 (Llorente 45)
Mallorca 3 (Castro 43, Nunes 49, Aduriz 51) Att: 35,000

Real Madrid 3 (Cristiano Ronaldo 25, 89, Marcelo 44)
Osasuna 2 (Aranda 7, Vadocz 42) Att: 75,000

Sevilla 3 (Luis Fabiano 5, Negredo pen 13, pen 40)
Atletico Madrid 1 (Tiago 8) Att: 40,000

Tuesday, May 4

Almeria 4 (Crusat 14, Uche 29, 42, Piatti 90)
Villarreal 2 (Marcano 54, Ibagaza 66) Att: 18,000

Barcelona 4 (Messi 17, 90, Bojan 63, Pedro 77)
Tenerife 1 (Roman 39) Att: 57,401

Getafe 1 (Soldado 47)
Sporting Gijon 1 (De las Cuevas 18) Att: 10,000

Valencia 3 (Mata 45, 58, Silva 68)
Xerez 1 (Armenteros 37) Att: 35,000

Wednesday, May 5

Athletic Bilbao 1 (Toquero 4)
Malaga 1 (Duda 18) Att: 35,000

Atletico Madrid 3 (Juanito 43, Jurado 67, Forlan 73)
Valladolid 1 (Sesma 78) Att: 25,000

Mallorca 1 (Aduriz 16)
Real Madrid 4 (Cristiano Ronaldo 26, 56, 72, Higuain 81) Att: 19,200

Osasuna 3 (Camunas 11, Pandiani 24, Juanfran 32)
Deportivo La Coruna 1 (Riki 15) Att: 14,417

Racing Santander 1 (Tchite 61)
Sevilla 5 (Negredo 2, 88, Kanoute pen 21, Jesus Navas 46, Capel 48) Att: 17,500

Zaragoza 1 (Colunga pen 78)
Espanyol 0 Att: 22,000

Saturday, May 8

Deportivo La Coruna 1 (Riki 68)
Mallorca 0 Att: 7,000

Espanyol 2 (Forlin 50, Osvaldo 52)
Osasuna 1 (Vadocz 6) Att: 20,000

Getafe 2 (Soldado 26, Pedro Leon 56)
Malaga 1 (Fernando 90) Att: 10,000

Real Madrid 5 (Cristiano Ronaldo pen 22, Higuain 73, Sergio Ramos 80, Benzema 81, Marcelo 89)
Athletic Bilbao 1 (Yeste 41) Att: 79,000

Sevilla 2 (Kanoute 69, Luis Fabiano 71)
Barcelona 3 (Messi 5, Bojan 28, Pedro 62) Att: 45,000

Sporting Gijon 1 (De las Cuevas 57)
Atletico Madrid 1 (Balde 71) Att: 21,000

Tenerife 2 (Marc Bertran 15, Nino 90)
Almeria 2 (Piatti 18, Crusat 80) Att: 20,810

Valladolid 2 (Baraja 57, Nauzet pen 77)
Racing Santander 1 (Christian 28) Att: 17,522

Villarreal 2 (Rossi 10, Llorente 18)
Valencia 0 Att: 16,023

Xerez 3 (Francis 22, Michel 69, Carlos Calvo 73)
Zaragoza 2 (Ander 67, Gabi 76) Att: 12,000

Saturday, May 15

Almeria 2 (Soriano 44, Juanma Ortiz 79)
Sevilla 3 (Kanoute 16, Chico og 53, Rodri 90) Att: 18,194

Athletic Bilbao 2 (Muniain 19, Javi Martinez 77)
Deportivo La Coruna 0 Att: 32,000

Atletico Madrid 0
Getafe 3 (Soldado 14, 53, Parejo 87) Att: 45,000

Mallorca 2 (Victor 24, Mario Suarez 78)
Espanyol 0 Att: 14,000

Zaragoza 3 (Eliseu 3, Colunga 29, Pulido 35)
Villarreal 3 (Cazorla 40, 56, Rossi 77) Att: 22,000

Sunday, May 16

Barcelona 4 (Luis Prieto og 27, Pedro 31, Messi 62, 76)
Valladolid 0 Att: 98,772

Malaga 1 (Duda 9)
Real Madrid 1 (Van der Vaart 48) Att: 30,000

Osasuna 1 (Dady 55)
Xerez 1 (Antonito 61) Att: 15,042

Racing Santander 2 (Tchite 35, 54)
Sporting Gijon 0 Att: 20,000

Valencia 1 (Alexis 90)
Tenerife 0 Att: 50,000

SPAIN – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona	38	31	6	1	98	24	99
Real Madrid	38	31	3	4	102	35	96
Valencia	38	21	8	9	59	40	71
Sevilla	38	19	6	13	65	49	63
Mallorca	38	18	8	12	59	44	62
Getafe	38	17	7	14	58	48	58
Villarreal	38	16	8	14	58	57	56
Ath Bilbao	38	15	9	14	50	53	54
At Madrid	38	13	8	17	57	61	47
Dep Coruna	38	13	8	17	35	49	47
Espanyol	38	11	11	16	29	46	44
Osasuna	38	11	10	17	37	46	43
Almeria	38	10	12	16	43	55	42
Zaragoza	38	10	11	17	46	64	41
Sporting Gijon	38	9	13	16	36	51	40
R Santander	38	9	12	17	42	59	39
Malaga	38	7	16	15	42	48	37
Valladolid (R)	38	7	15	16	37	62	36
Tenerife (R)	38	9	9	20	40	74	36
Xerez (R)	38	8	10	20	38	66	34

TOP GOALSCORERS

34 Lionel Messi (Barcelona)
27 Gonzalo Higuain (Real Madrid)
26 Cristiano Ronaldo (Real Madrid)
21 David Villa (Valencia)
18 Diego Forlan (Atletico Madrid)

Promoted teams not decided by press time

SPANISH CUP

Final

May 19 - Camp Nou, Barcelona
Atletico Madrid 0
Sevilla 2 (Diego Capel 5, Jesus Navas 90+1)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 93,000. **Ref:** Mejuto Gonzalez

SWEDEN

Mar 30: Hacken 4 Trelleborgs 2.
Mar 31: Djurgardens 0 Brommapojkarna 0.
Apr 5: AIK 0 Orebro 1; Mjallby 1 Gefle 3; Trelleborgs 0 Helsingborgs 0.
Apr 6: IFK 1 Djurgardens 1; Brommapojkarna 1 GAIS 0; Malmo 1 Halmstads 1; Atvidabergs 0 Kalmar 0; Elfsborg 0 Hacken 0.
Apr 10: Hacken 0 Atvidabergs 0.
Apr 11: Helsingborgs 2 Elfsborg 1; Halmstads 1 Mjallby 2; IFK 1 Brommapojkarna 1; Gefle 1 AIK 0; Kalmar 2 Malmo 3.
Apr 12: Djurgardens 3 Trelleborgs 0; Orebro 0 GAIS 2.
Apr 14: AIK 0 Halmstads 1; Malmo 3 Hacken 1; Atvidabergs 0 Helsingborgs 3.
Apr 15: Trelleborgs 2 IFK 1; Elfsborg 3 Djurgardens 1; Brommapojkarna 0 Orebro 1; GAIS 2 Gefle 1; Mjallby 0 Kalmar 0.
Apr 18: IFK 5 Elfsborg 1; Halmstads 3 GAIS 0.
Apr 19: Trelleborgs 0 Brommapojkarna 1; Gefle 1 Orebro 3; Kalmar 0 AIK 3; Hacken 0 Mjallby 1.
Apr 20: Djurgardens 2 Atvidabergs 1; Helsingborgs 2 Malmo 1.
Apr 24: Atvidabergs 2 IFK 1; AIK 1 Hacken 1.
Apr 25: Brommapojkarna 2 Gefle 1; GAIS 2 Kalmar 2; Elfsborg 4 Trelleborgs 1; Orebro 3 Halmstads 0.
Apr 26: Malmo 2 Djurgardens 1; Mjallby 0 Helsingborgs 1.
Apr 28: Halmstads 1 Gefle 0; Kalmar 4 Orebro 1; Hacken 0 GAIS 2.
Apr 29: Helsingborgs 1 AIK 0; Trelleborgs 0 Atvidabergs 3; IFK 0 Malmo 2; Djurgardens 1 Mjallby 0; Elfsborg 1 Brommapojkarna 0.
May 2: AIK 1 Djurgardens 2; Atvidabergs 1 Elfsborg 1; Malmo 2 Trelleborgs 0; Gefle 0 Kalmar 0; Brommapojkarna 1 Halmstads 0; Orebro 2 Hacken 0.
May 3: Mjallby 0 IFK 0; GAIS 0 Helsingborgs 0.
May 5: Elfsborg 2 Malmo 2; Kalmar 1 Halmstads 0; Atvidabergs 4 Brommapojkarna 1; Hacken 0 Gefle 2.
May 6: Trelleborgs 2 Mjallby 1; IFK 4 AIK 0; Djurgardens 1 GAIS 1; Helsingborgs 2 Orebro 1.
May 8: Malmo 3 Atvidabergs 1.
May 9: Orebro 1 Djurgardens 0; Halmstads 1 Hacken 2; AIK 1 Trelleborgs 0; Mjallby 2 Elfsborg 0.
May 10: Gefle 1 Helsingborgs 3; Brommapojkarna 2 Kalmar 3; GAIS 0 IFK 0.
May 12: Elfsborg 4 AIK 0.
May 13: IFK 0 Orebro 0.
May 15: Brommapojkarna 2 Hacken 1; Halmstads 2 Djurgardens 0; Mjallby 4 Malmo 2.
May 16: Kalmar 1 Helsingborgs 0; Gefle 0 IFK 0; GAIS 0 Elfsborg 2.
May 17: AIK 4 Atvidabergs 1; Orebro 2 Trelleborgs 0.
May 22: Trelleborgs 2 GAIS 0; Helsingborgs 2 Halmstads 1; Djurgardens 1 Gefle 1; Atvidabergs 1 Mjallby 2; Hacken 1 Kalmar 1.
May 24: Malmo 2 Brommapojkarna 1.

SWEDEN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Helsingborgs	14	11	2	1	20	6	35
Malmo	14	9	3	2	29	16	30
Orebro	14	8	1	5	17	14	25
Mjallby	14	7	3	4	18	11	24
Elfsborg	14	6	5	3	27	16	23
Kalmar	14	4	7	3	17	18	19
Bromm'karna	14	5	3	6	12	15	18
Halmstads	14	5	2	7	15	18	17
GAIS	14	4	5	5	12	16	17
Djurgardens	14	4	4	6	14	16	16
Gefle	14	4	4	6	13	16	16
Hacken	14	4	4	6	13	18	16
IFK	14	3	6	5	16	12	15
AIK	14	3	3	8	11	19	12
Atvidabergs	14	3	3	8	14	24	12
Trelleborgs	14	3	3	8	10	23	12

Victors...Argentinos Juniors

ARGENTINA

An eighth winner

Argentinos Juniors ended a 25-year wait for championship glory, winning the 2010 clausura under coach Claudio Borghi – who was a midfielder in the club's last title-winning side in 1985.

El Bicho claimed their third league title after Estudiantes could only draw 0-0 in their penultimate game at home to Rosario Central. It was quite a turnaround for the team who finished bottom of the 2009 clausura and provided a fitting end to the career of 39-year-old ex-international striker Jose Luis Calderon who has now retired.

Godoy Cruz, who had been expected to be involved in a battle against relegation, were the only team to finish the campaign unbeaten at home and finished in a best-ever third place under novice coach Omar Asad.

Less happy were Boca Juniors who finished 16th – their worst season since the introduction of the bi-championship format.

There have now been eight different winners in the last eight championships.

Argentinos Juniors follow on from a sequence that began in 2006 with Estudiantes and has continued with San Lorenzo, Lanus, River Plate, Boca Juniors, Velez Sarsfield and Banfield.

This equalled a South American record, set when eight different clubs became Brazilian champions between 1983 and 1990. The world record is held by Indonesia and Holland, where 11 different teams claimed the national title in consecutive seasons from 1992 to 2003 and 1943 to 1954 respectively.

SWITZERLAND

Apr 1: Bellinzona 1 Grasshopper 2; Zurich 1 St Gallen 1; Basle 4 Sion 3.
Apr 3: Lucerne 2 Xamax 1; Aarau 1 Young Boys 5.
Apr 5: Zurich 3 Grasshopper 2.
Apr 10: Young Boys 2 Bellinzona 1; Sion 4 Aarau 0; Xamax 0 Grasshopper 1.
Apr 11: Zurich 1 Basle 2; St Gallen 3 Lucerne 1.
Apr 13: Grasshopper 2 Young Boys 1; Aarau 1 Xamax 0.
Apr 14: Lucerne 1 Sion 1; Bellinzona 1 Zurich 4; Basle 3 St Gallen 2.
Apr 17: Xamax 2 Bellinzona 0; Zurich 0 Aarau 1.
Apr 18: Sion 4 Young Boys 1; Basle 5 Lucerne 0; St Gallen 0 Grasshopper 1.
Apr 24: Aarau 2 St Gallen 0; Lucerne 4 Zurich 1.
Apr 25: Bellinzona 2 Sion 1; Grasshopper 4 Basle 0; Young Boys 4 Xamax 1.
May 1: Sion 1 Grasshopper 0; St Gallen 2 Xamax 1.
May 2: Basle 4 Bellinzona 0; Lucerne 4 Aarau 0; Zurich 0 Young Boys 2.
May 5: Young Boys 2 St Gallen 1; Aarau 0 Basle 3.
May 6: Bellinzona 0 Lucerne 0; Grasshopper 4 Zurich 0; Xamax 4 Sion 1.
May 13: Aarau 1 Grasshopper 4; Basle 3 Xamax 0; Lucerne 5 Young Boys 1; St Gallen 1 Bellinzona 2; Zurich 2 Sion 0.
May 16: Bellinzona 1 Aarau 2; Grasshopper 0 Lucerne 1; Xamax 3 Zurich 3; Sion 5 St Gallen 1; Young Boys 0 Basle 2.

SWITZERLAND – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Basle	36	25	5	6	90	46	80
Young Boys	36	25	2	9	78	47	77
Grasshopper	36	21	2	13	65	43	65
Lucerne	36	17	7	12	66	55	58
Sion	36	14	9	13	63	57	51
St Gallen	36	13	7	16	53	56	46
Zurich	36	12	9	15	55	58	45
Xamax	36	11	8	17	55	57	41
Bellinzona	36	7	4	25	42	92	25
Aarau (R)	36	6	5	25	32	88	23

TOP GOALSCORERS
30 Seydou Doumbia (Young Boys)
21 Cristian Ianu (Lucerne)
21 Emile Mpenza (Sion)
21 Marco Streller (Basle)

Promoted: *Thun*

SWISS CUP

Final
May 9 - St-Jakob Park, Basle
Basle 6 (Stocker 28, 75, Shaqiri 30, Zoua 46, Chipperfield 52, Huggel 89)
Lausanne 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 31,100. **Ref:** Kever

TURKEY

Apr 2: Ankaragucu 0 Besiktas 0.
Apr 3: Istanbul BB 3 Denizlispor 1; Bursaspor 2 Antalyaspor 1.
Apr 4: Eskisehirspor 2 Kasimpasa 0; Diyarbakirspor 1 Gaziantepspor 3; Manisaspor 0 Genclerbirligi 0; Trabzonspor 3 Ankaraspor 0 (awarded); Fenerbahce 2 Kayserispor 0.
Apr 5: Sivasspor 1 Galatasaray 1.
Apr 9: Gaziantepspor 0 Manisaspor 0.
Apr 10: Antalyaspor 1 Istanbul BB 3; Besiktas 0 Trabzonspor 0.
Apr 11: Kasimpasa 2 Ankaragucu 0; Genclerbirligi 0 Bursaspor 0; Ankaraspor 0 Fenerbahce 3 (awarded); Denizlispor 1 Eskisehirspor 0; Galatasaray 4 Diyarbakirspor 1.
Apr 12: Kayserispor 2 Sivasspor 2.
Apr 16: Bursaspor 2 Gaziantepspor 0.
Apr 17: Istanbul BB 1 Genclerbirligi 3; Manisaspor 1 Galatasaray 2; Sivasspor 3 Ankaraspor 0 (awarded).
Apr 18: Ankaragucu 3 Eskisehirspor 1; Diyarbakirspor 0 Kayserispor 3; Antalyaspor 2 Denizlispor 1; Fenerbahce 1 Besiktas 0.
Apr 19: Trabzonspor 2 Kasimpasa 0.
Apr 24: Genclerbirligi 0 Antalyaspor 2; Denizlispor 0 Ankaragucu 0; Kayserispor 1 Manisaspor 2; Besiktas 2 Sivasspor 2; Ankaraspor 0 Diyarbakirspor 3 (awarded).
Apr 25: Gaziantepspor 2 Istanbul BB 3; Kasimpasa 0 Fenerbahce 1; Galatasaray 0 Bursaspor 0.
Apr 26: Eskisehirspor 1 Trabzonspor 0.
May 1: Ankaragucu 1 Trabzonspor 0; Bursaspor 2 Kayserispor 0; Fenerbahce 2 Eskisehirspor 0; Istanbul BB 0 Galatasaray 1; Manisaspor 3 Ankaraspor 0 (awarded).
May 2: Antalyaspor 1 Gaziantepspor 0; Denizlispor 2 Genclerbirligi 0; Sivasspor 1 Kasimpasa 1; Diyarbakirspor 1 Besiktas 3.
May 7: Besiktas 2 Manisaspor 0.
May 8: Gaziantepspor 1 Genclerbirligi 1; Galatasaray 1 Antalyaspor 2; Ankaraspor 0 Bursaspor 3 (awarded).
May 9: Ankaragucu 0 Fenerbahce 3; Kayserispor 1 Istanbul BB 1; Kasimpasa 1 Diyarbakirspor 0; Eskisehirspor 1 Sivasspor 1.
May 10: Trabzonspor 2 Denizlispor 1.
May 15: Denizlispor 1 Gaziantepspor 1; Sivasspor 3 Ankaragucu 3; Diyarbakirspor 0 Eskisehirspor 2; Antalyaspor 4 Kayserispor 0; Istanbul BB 3 Ankaraspor 0 (awarded).
May 16: Manisaspor 0 Kasimpasa 0; Fenerbahce 1 Trabzonspor 1; Bursaspor 2 Besiktas 1; Genclerbirligi 2 Galatasaray 1.

TURKEY – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bursaspor	34	23	6	5	65	26	75
Fenerbahce	34	23	5	6	61	28	74
Galatasaray	34	19	7	8	61	35	64
Besiktas	34	18	10	6	47	25	64
Trabzonspor	34	16	9	9	53	32	57
Istanbul BB	34	16	8	10	47	44	56
Eskisehirspor	34	15	10	9	44	34	55
Kayserispor	34	14	9	11	45	37	51
Antalyaspor	34	14	7	13	49	38	49
Genclerbirligi	34	12	11	11	38	35	47
Kasimpasa	34	10	11	13	50	53	41
Ankaragucu	34	9	14	11	39	40	41
Gaziantepspor	34	9	13	12	38	39	40
Manisaspor	34	8	13	13	27	34	37
Sivasspor	34	8	10	16	42	59	34
Diyar'spor (R)	34	6	9	19	28	54	27
Denizlispor (R)	34	6	8	20	30	49	26
Ank'spor* (R)	34	0	0	34	0	102	0

**Ankaraspor expelled from league for having "anti-competitive" links with Ankaragucu; all games awarded as 3-0 wins to their opponents*

TOP GOALSCORERS
21 Ariza Makukula (Kayserispor)
13 Julio Cesar de Souza (Gaziantepspor)
12 Bobo (Besiktas)
12 Necati Ates (Antalyaspor)

Promoted: *Karabukspor, Bucaspor, Konyaspor*

TURKISH CUP

Final
May 5 - GAP stadium, Sanliurfa
Trabzonspor 3 (Umut 66, Engin 79, Colman 90+3)
Fenerbahce 1 (Alex 55)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Cakir

UKRAINE

Apr 2: Karpaty 1 Chornomorets 1.
Apr 3: Vorskla 3 Illichivets 0; Zorya 0 Dynamo 2; Metalist 1 Tavriya 1; Metalurh Donetsk 0 Kryvbas 1; Dnipro 1 Zakarpattya 0; Obolon 0 Shakhtar 1.
Apr 4: Arsenal 2 Metalurh Zaporizhya 0.
Apr 7: Zorya 1 Metalurh Donetsk 1; Karpaty 1 Tavriya 0.
Apr 9: Metalurh Zaporizhya 2 Obolon 1.
Apr 10: Kryvbas 2 Metalist 2; Chornomorets 0 Vorskla 0; Dynamo 3 Arsenal 1; Shakhtar 0 Dnipro 0.
Apr 11: Illichivets 0 Metalurh Donetsk 4; Zakarpattya 1 Karpaty 1; Tavriya 0 Zorya 1.
Apr 14: Dnipro 2 Metalurh Zaporizhya 0; Obolon 0 Dynamo 4.
Apr 15: Arsenal 1 Tavriya 6; Zakarpattya 1 Chornomorets 1; Zorya 1 Kryvbas 0; Metalurh Donetsk 1 Vorskla 3; Metalist 3 Illichivets 1; Karpaty 0 Shakhtar 2.
Apr 18: Kryvbas 0 Arsenal 1; Chornomorets 1 Metalurh Donetsk 1; Illichivets 1 Zorya 0; Dynamo 2 Dnipro 1; Shakhtar 1 Zakarpattya 0; Vorskla 0 Metalist 0.
Apr 19: Tavriya 0 Obolon 0; Metalurh Zaporizhya 0 Karpaty 1.
Apr 23: Arsenal 3 Illichivets 1.
Apr 24: Zorya 2 Vorskla 1; Dnipro 3 Tavriya 1; Karpaty 1 Dynamo 0; Metalist 2 Metalurh Donetsk 0.
Apr 25: Zakarpattya 0 Metalurh Zaporizhya 1; Obolon 1 Kryvbas 2; Shakhtar 3 Chornomorets 0.
Apr 30: Vorskla 1 Arsenal 5; Metalurh Donetsk 0 Zorya 0.
May 1: Kryvbas 0 Dnipro 0; Chornomorets 0 Metalist 2; Illichivets 1 Obolon 0; Dynamo 2 Zakarpattya 0; Metalurh Zaporizhya 0 Shakhtar 2; Tavriya 1 Karpaty 1.
May 5: Shakhtar 1 Dynamo 0; Zakarpattya 0 Tavriya 1; Karpaty 0 Kryvbas 2; Dnipro 4 Illichivets 1; Obolon 1 Vorskla 1; Arsenal 2 Metalurh Donetsk 0; Zorya 1 Metalist 4; Metalurh Zaporizhya 1 Chornomorets 0.
May 9: Kryvbas 3 Zakarpattya 1; Dynamo 3 Metalurh Zaporizhya 0; Tavriya 2 Shakhtar 3; Vorskla 1 Dnipro 1; Illichivets 2 Karpaty 2; Metalist 1 Arsenal 0; Metalurh Donetsk 5 Obolon 0; Chornomorets 1 Zorya 1.

UKRAINE – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shakhtar	30	24	5	1	62	18	77
Dynamo	30	22	5	3	61	16	71
Metalist	30	19	5	6	49	23	62
Dnipro	30	15	9	6	48	25	54
Karpaty	30	13	11	6	44	35	50
Tavriya	30	12	9	9	38	38	45
Arsenal	30	11	9	10	44	41	42
Metalurh D	30	11	7	12	41	33	40
Metalurh Z	30	10	5	15	31	48	35
Vorskla	30	6	13	11	29	32	31
Obolon	30	9	4	17	26	50	31
Illichivets	30	7	8	15	31	56	29
Zorya	30	7	7	16	23	47	28
Kryvbas	30	7	4	19	31	47	25
Chor'morets (R)	30	5	9	16	21	44	24
Zakarpattya (R)	30	5	4	21	18	44	19

TOP GOALSCORERS
17 Artem Milevskyi (Dynamo)
16 Jackson Coelho (Metalist)
13 Yevhen Selezniov (Dnipro)

Promoted: *Sevastopol, Volyn Lutsk*

UKRAINIAN CUP

Final
May 16 - Metalist stadium, Kharkiv
Tavriya 3 (Feschuk 2, Kovpak pen 40, Idahor 97)
Metalurh Donetsk 2 (Mkhitaryan 50, Mario Sergio 75)
Aet. **HT:** 2-0. **90mins:** 2-2. **Att:** 21,000.
Ref: Derevynskyi
Sent off: Juricic 94min, Markovic 120min (both Tavriya)

WALES

WALES – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
TNS	34	25	7	2	69	13	82
Llanelli	34	25	5	4	79	26	80
Port Talbot	34	19	8	7	56	23	65
Aberystwyth	34	19	7	8	54	41	64
Bangor	34	19	6	9	75	45	63
Rhyl (R*)	34	18	8	8	74	43	62
Airbus UK	34	12	13	9	49	37	49
Prestatyn	34	12	12	10	53	53	48
Neath	34	12	11	11	41	38	47
Carmarthen	34	12	9	13	45	38	45
Bala	34	12	9	13	39	47	45
Hav'fordwest	34	11	11	12	43	47	44
Newtown	34	10	11	13	54	57	41
Connah's Q (R*)	34	11	8	15	31	42	41
Porth'dog (R*)	34	6	6	22	23	66	24
Welshpool (R*)	34	6	5	23	30	70	23
Caersws (R*)	34	3	4	27	26	94	13
Cefn Druids (R*)	34	1	6	27	16	77	9

**Division reduced to 12 teams from 16 for 2010-11 season. Licences to play in the top flight were awarded with regard to a number of factors, including financial strength and ground safety, not just league performance*

No teams promoted

WELSH CUP

Final
May 1 - Parc y Scarlets, Llanelli
Bangor 3 (Hunt 6, Reed 16, Morley 90)
Port Talbot 2 (Fahiya 57, McCreesh 85)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 1,303. **Ref:** John

Better...Santos' Robinho (right)

BRAZIL

State champions

Santos won the Paulista state championship despite a remarkable 5-5 aggregate draw with Santo Andre.

Having won the first leg 3-2, Santos found themselves down to eight men in the second leg as Santo Andre levelled the tie. But Santos were eventually crowned champions due to a better regular-season record.

Elsewhere, Atletico Mineiro won the Mineiro state title for the 40th time, Gremio won the Gaucho title after defeating Internacional 2-1 over two legs and Botafogo won the Carioca by beating Flamengo 2-1 over one game in the Final.

Santos will meet Vitoria in the Brazilian Cup Final, with the first leg on July 28 and the return on August 4.

Hero...Aguirre (centre)

URUGUAY

Aguirre triumphs again

Diego Aguirre, who was coach the last time Penarol were champions seven years ago, led the clausura winners to a 2-1 aggregate victory in the championship play-off Final against Nacional. "There was a need to be champions, Penarol needed to win, the happiness is incomparable. This is a moment of glory," he said.

SOUTH AMERICA

LIBERTADORES CUP

Group 1

Apr 1
Corinthians (Bra) 2 (Ronaldo 37, Chicao 64)
Cerro Porteno (Par) 1 (Dos Santos 80)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Carrillo (Per)

Apr 8
Independiente Medellin (Col) 1 (Arias 56)
Cerro Porteno 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Buckley (Per)
Sent off: Burgos (Cerro Porteno) 68min

Apr 14
Racing (Uru) 0
Corinthians 2 (Dentinho 18, Elias 87)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Baldassi (Arg)

Apr 22
Cerro Porteno 0
Racing 0
Ref: Rivera (Per)

Apr 22
Corinthians 1 (Valencia og 23)
Independiente Medellin 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Beligoy (Arg)

LIBERTADORES CUP – GROUP 1 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Corinthians	6	5	1	0	9	3	16
Racing	6	2	2	2	4	5	8
Ind Medellin	6	1	3	2	3	4	6
Cerro Porteno	6	0	2	4	3	7	2

Group 2

Mar 31
Monterrey (Mex) 0
Sao Paulo (Bra) 0
Ref: Laverni (Arg)

Apr 1
Once Caldas (Col) 1 (Valencia 14)
Nacional (Par) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Gomez (Ven)

Apr 21
Nacional 2 (Paniagua 4, Beltran 67)
Monterrey 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Orozco (Bol)

Apr 21
Sao Paulo 1 (Fernandinho 40)
Once Caldas 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Abal (Arg)

LIBERTADORES CUP – GROUP 2 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sao Paulo	6	4	1	1	9	2	13
Once Caldas	6	3	2	1	8	5	11
Monterrey	6	1	3	2	5	8	6
Nacional	6	1	0	5	3	10	3

Group 3

Mar 30
Juan Aurich (Per) 0
Estudiantes (Arg) 2 (Fernandez 52, Brana 68)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Amarilla (Par)
Sent off: Alvarez 86min, Tejada 90min (both Juan Aurich)

Apr 8
Alianza Lima (Per) 1 (Fernandez 6)
Bolivar (Bol) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Soto (Ven)
Sent off: Villamarin (Alianza Lima) 87min

Apr 20
Bolivar 2 (Flores 71, Da Rosa pen 86)
Juan Aurich 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Osorio (Chl)

Apr 20
Estudiantes 1 (Veron 90+5)
Alianza Lima 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Silvera (Uru)
Sent off: W Vilchez (Alianza Lima) 90+3min

LIBERTADORES CUP – GROUP 3 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Estudiantes	6	4	1	1	11	5	13
Alianza Lima	6	4	0	2	12	7	12
Juan Aurich	6	2	0	4	7	13	6
Bolivar	6	1	1	4	3	8	4

Group 4

Mar 30
Libertad (Par) 1 (Roman 3)
Lanus (Arg) 1 (Velazquez 83)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** De Oliveira (Bra)
Sent off: Salcedo (Lanus) 41min

Apr 6
Universitario (Per) 0
Blooming (Bol) 0
Ref: Lopes (Bra)

Apr 15
Blooming 1 (Hurtado 27)
Libertad 2 (Roman 38, Rodolfo Gamarra 53)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Larrionda (Uru)

Apr 15
Lanus 0
Universitario 0
Ref: Simon (Bra)
Sent off: Pelletieri 90+5min, Diaz 90+5min (both Lanus); Fernandez 90+5min, Galliquio 90+5min (both Universitario)

LIBERTADORES CUP – GROUP 4 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Libertad	6	3	3	0	10	3	12
Universitario	6	2	4	0	5	2	10
Lanus	6	2	2	2	6	6	8
Blooming	6	0	1	5	3	13	1

Group 5

Mar 31
Internacional (Bra) 2 (Ibanez og 58, Alecsandro 72)
Cerro (Uru) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Torres (Par)

Apr 1
Emelec (Ecu) 0
Deportivo Quito (Ecu) 1 (Hurtado pen 90+3)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Haro (Ecu)
Sent off: Achilier (Emelec) 79min

Apr 13
Deportivo Quito 2 (Mina 20, Checa 86)
Cerro 1 (Dadomo pen 27)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Ruiz (Col)

Apr 14
Emelec 0
Internacional 0
Ref: Escalante (Ven)

Apr 22
Internacional 3 (Andrezinho 4, Bolivar 61, Giuliano 90+3)
Deportivo Quito 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Amarilla (Par)
Sent off: Edu (Internacional) 89min

Apr 22
Cerro 0
Emelec 0
Ref: Gamboa (Bol)
Sent off: Suarez (Cerro) 76min; Quiroz (Emelec) 80min

LIBERTADORES CUP – GROUP 5 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Internacional	6	3	3	0	8	2	12
Dep Quito	6	3	1	2	5	7	10
Cerro	6	2	2	2	5	5	8
Emelec	6	0	2	4	2	6	2

Group 6

Mar 31
Morelia (Mex) 1 (Borgetti 78)
Banfield (Arg) 1 (Laso 90+2)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Ruiz (Col)
Sent off: Battion (Banfield) 66min; Gastelum (Morelia) 74min

Apr 7
Deportivo Cuenca (Ecu) 0
Nacional (Uru) 0
Ref: Pozo (Chl)
Sent off: Morales (Nacional) 90min

Apr 21
Nacional 2 (Regueiro 3, Pereyra 78)
Morelia 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** De Oliveira (Bra)

Apr 21
Banfield 4 (Ramirez 48, 68, Erviti 87, Lucchetti pen 90)
Deportivo Cuenca 1 (Mendez 72)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Galeano (Par)

LIBERTADORES CUP – GROUP 6 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nacional	6	3	3	0	9	4	12
Banfield	6	3	2	1	13	8	11
Morelia	6	1	2	3	4	8	5
Dep Cuenca	6	1	1	4	7	13	4

Group 7

Mar 31
Cruzeiro (Bra) 3 (Thiago Ribeiro 33, Kleber 49, 54)
Velez Sarsfield (Arg) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Roldan (Col)
Sent off: Somoza (Velez) 82min

Apr 6
Deportivo Italia (Ven) 2 (Panigutti 15, Blanco pen 86)
Colo Colo (Chl) 3 (Bogado 26, Miralles 38, 57)
HT: 1-2. **Ref:** Rodriguez (Mex)

Apr 15
Colo Colo 1 (Millar 61)
Cruzeiro 1 (Thiago Ribeiro 57)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Torres (Par)
Sent off: Scotti (Colo Colo) 80min

Apr 15
Velez Sarsfield 4 (Zapata 42, Lopez pen 48, 83, Papa 73)
Deportivo Italia 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ubriaco (Uru)

LIBERTADORES CUP – GROUP 7 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Velez	6	4	1	1	10	5	13
Cruzeiro	6	3	2	1	12	6	11
Colo Colo	6	2	2	2	8	10	8
Dep Italia	6	0	1	5	4	13	1

Group 8

Apr 8
Flamengo (Bra) 2 (Michael 68, Leo Moura 83)
Universidad de Chile (Chl) 2 (Montillo 43, Rodriguez 90+2)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Silvera (Uru)

Apr 13
Caracas (Ven) 1 (Gonzalez 76)
Universidad de Chile 3 (Victorino 18, Olivera pen 32, Rodriguez 35)
HT: 0-3. **Ref:** Antequera (Bol)
Sent off: Guerra (Caracas) 67min

Apr 14
Universidad Catolica (Chl) 2 (Diaz 2, Silva 45)
Flamengo 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Pezzotta (Arg)

Apr 21
Universidad de Chile 0
Universidad Catolica 0
Ref: Pozo (Chl)
Sent off: Diaz (Univ Catolica) 89min

Apr 21
Flamengo 3 (Ronaldo Angelim 17, Michael 19, David 75)
Caracas 2 (Castellin 14, Gomez 67)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Larrionda (Uru)

LIBERTADORES CUP – GROUP 8 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Univ Chile	6	3	3	0	10	6	12
Flamengo	6	3	1	2	11	9	10
Univ Catolica	6	1	4	1	5	5	7
Caracas	6	0	2	4	5	11	2

Group winners and the six runners-up with the best record qualified for 1st knockout round, to which Guadalajara (Mex) and San Luis (Mex) received byes

1st knockout round

1st legs

Apr 27
Guadalajara 3 (Bravo 25, 79, Reynoso pen 90+2)
Velez Sarsfield 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ruiz (Col)
Sent off: Montoya (Velez) 90min

Apr 27
San Luis 0
Estudiantes 1 (Gonzalez 25)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Soto (Ven)
Sent off: Rodriguez 69min

Apr 28
Banfield 3 (Rodriguez 47, Battion 59, Fernandez 81)
Internacional 1 (Kleber 50)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Larrionda (Uru)
Sent off: Kleber (Internacional) 58min; Barraza (Banfield) 84min

CANADA

Impact to join MLS in two years

Montreal Impact will become the 19th franchise in Major League Soccer when they join the USA league in 2012.

They will play alongside fellow Canadians Vancouver Whitecaps, who join in 2011, and Toronto, who won the Canadian championship for the second successive season.

Crowned...Toronto

EL SALVADOR

Metapan claim title

Isidro Metapan were crowned clausura champions after beating Aguila 3-1 in the Final. Firpo finished top of the table but lost 4-3 on aggregate to Isidro Metapan in the semis.

GUATEMALA

Municipal win again

Municipal won the clausura title, beating Xelaju 7-1 on aggregate, for a 28th domestic title.

HONDURAS

Olimpia book place

Olimpia beat Motagua 3-2 on aggregate in the final play-off to win the clausura title and qualify for the CONCACAF Champions League. Motagua and Marathon go into the preliminary round.

Ace...Isidro Metapan

Apr 28
Flamengo 1 (Adriano pen 66)
Corinthians 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Amarilla (Par)
Sent off: Michael (Flamengo) 37min

Apr 28
Universitario 0
Sao Paulo 0
Ref: Laverni (Arg)
Sent off: Richarlyson (Sao Paulo) 65min

Apr 29
Alianza Lima 0
Universidad de Chile 1 (Rivarola 86)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Simon (Bra)

Apr 29
Cruzeiro 3 (Thiago Ribeiro 7, 22, 42)
Nacional (Uru) 1 (Regueiro 51)
HT: 3-0. **Ref:** Baldassi (Arg)

Apr 29
Once Caldas 0
Libertad 0
Ref: Fagundes (Bra)

2nd legs

May 4
Sao Paulo 0
Universitario 0
Ref: Torres (Par)
Agg 0-0. Sao Paulo 3-1 on pens

May 4
Velez Sarsfield 2 (Silva 3, Zarate 89)
Guadalajara 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Seneme (Bra)
Guadalajara 3-2 on agg

May 5
Corinthians 2 (David og 28, Ronaldo 39)
Flamengo 1 (Vagner Love 49)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Silvera (Uru)
Agg 2-2. Flamengo on away goals

May 5
Estudiantes 3 (Gonzalez 4, Benitez 51, 55)
San Luis 1 (De la Torre 7)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Carrillo (Per)
Estudiantes 4-1 on agg

May 5
Nacional (Uru) 0
Cruzeiro 3 (Thiago Ribeiro 30, Diego Renan 48, Gilberto 81)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Beligoy (Arg)
Sent off: Coates 54min, Varela 70min (both Nacional); Leonardo Silva (Cruzeiro) 53min
Cruzeiro 6-1 on agg

May 6
Internacional 2 (Alecsandro 41, Walter 57)
Banfield 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Roldan (Col)
Sent off: Rodriguez (Banfield) 82min
Agg 3-3. Internacional on away goals

May 6
Libertad 2 (Roberto Gamarra pen 73, 89)
Once Caldas 1 (Moreno 55)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Pezzotta (Arg)
Libertad 2-1 on agg

May 6
Universidad de Chile 2 (E Vargas 63, Seymour 90+2)
Alianza Lima 2 (Fernandez 24, 87)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Vera (Ecu)
Universidad de Chile 3-2 on agg

Quarter-finals

1st legs

May 11
Guadalajara 3 (Bravo 9, 80, Vazquez 30)
Libertad 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Pozo (Chl)

May 12
Cruzeiro 0
Sao Paulo 2 (Dagoberto 23, Hernanes 65)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Ruiz (Col)

May 12
Flamengo 2 (Adriano 39, Juan 88)
Universidad de Chile 3 (Victorino 4, Olarra 24, Fernandez 47)
HT: 1-2. **Ref:** Amarilla (Par)
Sent off: Iturra (Universidad) 45min

May 13
Internacional 1 (Sorondo 88)
Estudiantes 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Silvera (Uru)

2nd legs

May 18
Libertad 2 (Roman 20, Maciel 68)
Guadalajara 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Baldassi (Arg)
Guadalajara 3-2 on agg

May 19
Sao Paulo 2 (Hernanes 24, Dagoberto 53)
Cruzeiro 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Larrionda (Uru)
Sent off: Kleber (Cruzeiro) 2min
Sao Paulo 4-0 on agg

May 20
Estudiantes 2 (Gonzalez 19, Perez 21)
Internacional 1 (Giuliano 88)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Ruiz (Col)
Agg 2-2. Internacional on away goals

May 20
Universidad de Chile 1 (Montillo 73)
Flamengo 2 (Vagner Love 45, Adriano 78)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Silvera (Uru)
Sent off: Willians 89min, Vagner Love 90+5min (both Flamengo)
Agg 4-4. Universidad on away goals

Semi-finals draw

Guadalajara v Universidad de Chile
Internacional v Sao Paulo
1st legs - July 28; 2nd legs - August 4

ARGENTINA

Clausura

Friday, April 2
Huracan 0
Colon 0

Saturday, April 3
Argentinos Juniors 2 (Coria 19, 22)
Chacarita Juniors 1 (Zarif 71)

Independiente 1 (Nunez 30)
Arsenal 0

Newell's Old Boys 0
Tigre 2 (Garat 4, Rodriguez 71)

San Lorenzo 0
Gimnasia La Plata 1 (Romero 6)

Sunday, April 4
Boca Juniors 1 (Gaitan 61)
Rosario Central 2 (De Leon 43, Caraglio 86)

Estudiantes 1 (Boselli 15)
Banfield 1 (Quinteros 40)

Godoy Cruz 2 (Salinas 72, Carranza 74)
Velez Sarsfield 0

Lanus 1 (Blanco 40)
River Plate 0

Tuesday, April 6
Arsenal 0
Huracan 1 (Clara 61)

Tigre 3 (Fondacaro 22, Luna pen 42, 79)
Atletico Tucuman 1 (Escobar 86)

Wednesday, April 7
Banfield 2 (Battion 13, Ramirez pen 44)
San Lorenzo 0

Chacarita Juniors 1 (Vismara 60)
Lanus 2 (Castillejos 89, 90)

Gimnasia La Plata 2 (Perez 21, 68)
Independiente 1 (Mancuello 41)

River Plate 0
Newell's Old Boys 1 (Achucarro 52)

Thursday, April 8
Colon 3 (Fuertes 16, Bertoglio 35, 52)
Boca Juniors 0

Racing Club 0
Godoy Cruz 0

Rosario Central 0
Argentinos Juniors 1 (Sosa 59)

Velez Sarsfield 0
Estudiantes 1 (Fernandez 4)

Saturday, April 10
Huracan 3 (Franzoia 47, Rodriguez 53, Balvorin 90)
Gimnasia La Plata 1 (Aguero 55)

Independiente 0
San Lorenzo 1 (Benitez 9)

Newell's Old Boys 3 (Nunez 38, 70, 86)
Chacarita Juniors 0

Sunday, April 11
Atletico Tucuman 0
River Plate 0

Lanus 0
Rosario Central 0

Velez Sarsfield 0
Banfield 0

Monday, April 12
Argentinos Juniors 3 (Ortigoza 32, Calderon 45, Sosa 89)
Colon 1 (Bauman 90)

Boca Juniors 4 (Palermo 10, 62, Chavez 12, Riquelme 47)
Arsenal 0

Estudiantes 4 (Sosa 10, Rodriguez 31, Gonzalez 34, 65)
Racing Club 0

Godoy Cruz 6 (Dutari 13, Salinas 46, 69, 84, Vega 50, Sigali 67)
Tigre 2 (Lazzaro 55, Garcia og 57)

Saturday, April 17
Banfield 1 (Ramirez 35)
Independiente 3 (Silvera 22, Gracian 36, Nunez 90)

Chacarita Juniors 1 (Avalos 87)
Atletico Tucuman 2 (Gigliotti 67, Blanes 77)

River Plate 2 (Ortega 69, Ferrari 70)
Godoy Cruz 1 (Higuain 33)

Tigre 1 (Rojo og 40)
Estudiantes 2 (Desabato 8, Sosa 26)

Sunday, April 18
Gimnasia La Plata 1 (Perez 59)
Boca Juniors 0

Racing Club 3 (Luguercio 75, Yacob 78, Bieler 80)
Velez Sarsfield 1 (Tobio 40)

Rosario Central 1 (Braghieri 3)
Newell's Old Boys 1 (Schiavi pen 17)

San Lorenzo 3 (Gomez 22, Bordagaray 70, Leiva 73)
Huracan 0

Monday, April 19
Arsenal 2 (Leguizamon 35, pen 50)
Argentinos Juniors 2 (Calderon 9, Coria 89)

Colon 1 (Fuertes pen 49)
Lanus 1 (Pizarro 88)

Wednesday, April 21
Atletico Tucuman 0
Racing Club 1 (Grazzini 59)

Friday, April 23
Godoy Cruz 1 (Ramirez 19)
Chacarita Juniors 0

Velez Sarsfield 1 (Zarate 90)
Tigre 0

Saturday, April 24
Estudiantes 1 (Quiroga og 21)
River Plate 0

MEXICO

Riveros moves to England

Cruz Azul midfielder Cristian Riveros has signed for English Premier League club Sunderland, where he will join fellow Paraguay international Paulo Da Silva.

Meanwhile, Toluca won their 10th league title as they beat Santos Laguna 4-3 on penalties in the clausura championship Final. Santos had led 3-0 on spot-kicks at one point.

NICARAGUA

Poor grounds cost Real Esteli

Reigning champions Real Esteli were refused a place in next season's CONCACAF Champions League due to the country's lack of a suitable stadium.

PANAMA

Arabe Unido into Champions League

Arabe Unido beat San Francisco 1-0 to win the clausura title.

Tauro claimed the second Champions League spot – based on the fact that they have earned more points over both seasons among the runners-up – and go into the preliminary round.

Mexican finale...Santos' Carlos Quintero (left) and Edgar Duenas of Toluca

Huracan 0
Independiente 0

Lanus 4 (Hoyos 12, Salcedo 45, Diaz 50, Carrasco 81)
Arsenal 1 (Leguizamon 62)

Newell's Old Boys 5 (Boghossian 17, 58, Sperdutti 24, Formica 32, Achucarro 42)
Colon 0

Sunday, April 25

Argentinos Juniors 3 (Ortigoza pen 27, Sosa 70, Raymonda 87)
Gimnasia La Plata 1 (Castro 68)

Atletico Tucuman 2 (Rodriguez 3, 52)
Rosario Central 2 (Zelaya 21, Caraglio 58)

Boca Juniors 2 (Gimenez 3, Palermo 70)
San Lorenzo 0

Racing Club 2 (Martinez 75, Bieler 81)
Banfield 0

Thursday, April 29

Arsenal 0
Newell's Old Boys 2 (Alayes 12, Schiavi 31)

Friday, April 30

Gimnasia La Plata 0
Lanus 0

River Plate 2 (Ferrari 45, Buonanotte 82)
Velez Sarsfield 1 (Alvarez 9)

Rosario Central 1 (Chitzoff 90)
Godoy Cruz 0

Tigre 1 (Castano 27)
Racing Club 2 (Bieler 22, Aveldano 32)

Sunday, May 2

Banfield 1 (Laso 59)
Huracan 0

Chacarita Juniors 1 (Zarif 20)
Estudiantes 2 (Boselli pen 32, Cellay 36)

Colon 0
Atletico Tucuman 0

Independiente 2 (Piatti 30, Nunez pen 90)
Boca Juniors 3 (Monzon 32, Palermo 39, Mouche 88)

San Lorenzo 1 (Alfaro 41)
Argentinos Juniors 2 (Sosa 61, 89)

Saturday, May 8

Newell's Old Boys 6 (Boghossian pen 14, Formica 15, 59, Bernardi 34, Insaurralde 57, Schiavi pen 63)
Gimnasia La Plata 0

Racing Club 0
River Plate 3 (Funes Mori 3, 17, 24)

Velez Sarsfield 4 (Lopez 8, 13, 28, pen 81)
Chacarita Juniors 1 (Parra 19)

Sunday, May 9

Argentinos Juniors 4 (Pavlovich 26, 72, Sabia 89, Caruzzo 90)
Independiente 3 (Nunez 28, 67, Gandin 48)

Atletico Tucuman 1 (Pereyra 54)
Arsenal 1 (Leguizamon 19)

Boca Juniors 1 (Paletta 50)
Huracan 2 (Peralta 45, Machin 79)

Estudiantes 0
Rosario Central 0

Tigre 1 (Rodriguez 89)
Banfield 2 (Ramirez pen 47, Battion 66)

Monday, May 10

Godoy Cruz 3 (Higuain 68, Castillo 79, Martinez 86)
Colon 0

Lanus 3 (Castillejos 67, Salcedo 82, Velazquez 87)
San Lorenzo 2 (Romeo 26, Gomez 88)

Friday, May 14

Arsenal 1 (Alvarez 53)
Godoy Cruz 2 (Sigali 68, Salinas 71)

Banfield 3 (Bustamante 41, Paletta og 67, Ramirez 83)
Boca Juniors 0

San Lorenzo 2 (Romeo 46, Benitez 68)
Newell's Old Boys 1 (Schiavi pen 63)

Saturday, May 15

Chacarita Juniors 1 (D'Angelo 79)
Racing Club 2 (Fernandez 41, Bieler pen 64)

Gimnasia La Plata 3 (Casas 10, Navarro 19, Gonzalez 35)
At Tucuman 3 (Gigliotti 62, Montiglio 79, Barone 81)

Independiente 1 (Piatti 87)
Lanus 0

River Plate 1 (Funes Mori 51)
Tigre 5 (Perez 11, San Roman 12, Fontanello 17, Pasini 37, Lazzaro 44)

Rosario Central 0
Velez Sarsfield 0

Sunday, May 16

Colon 1 (Curuchet 76)
Estudiantes 4 (Boselli 11, 22, 49, Perez 54)

Huracan 1 (Sanchez 88)
Argentinos Juniors 2 (Mercier 23, Coria 78)

ARGENTINA – CLAUSURA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Argentinos Jrs	19	12	5	2	35	23	41
Estudiantes	19	12	4	3	33	14	40
Godoy Cruz	19	11	4	4	28	14	37
Independiente	19	10	4	5	25	18	34
Banfield	19	9	5	5	24	16	32
Newell's	19	8	6	5	32	18	30
Lanus	19	8	5	6	25	23	29
Racing Club	19	9	2	8	21	22	29
Velez	19	7	6	6	25	20	27
Huracan	19	7	5	7	21	22	26
Tigre	19	7	3	9	28	26	24
Gimnasia LP	19	6	6	7	21	29	24
River Plate	19	6	4	9	16	21	22
Colon	19	4	9	6	20	32	21
San Lorenzo	19	6	2	11	16	21	20
Boca Juniors	19	5	5	9	28	35	20
Rosario (R*)	19	3	10	6	12	19	19
Arsenal	19	5	4	10	19	33	19
Chacarita (R)	19	4	1	14	22	33	13
At Tucuman (R)	19	1	10	8	14	26	13

Relegation determined by points average over three most recent seasons
**Relegated after play-off*

TOP GOALSCORERS

13 Mauro Boselli (Estudiantes)
10 Martin Palermo (Boca Juniors)
10 Ruben Ramirez (Banfield)

Promoted: Olimpo, Quilmes, All Boys (after play-off)

BOLIVIA

Apertura

1st stage

BOLIVIA – APERTURA 1ST STAGE – GP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
The Strongest	12	5	4	3	21	18	19
San Jose	12	5	3	4	24	19	18
Aurora	12	4	5	3	18	16	17
Universitario	12	5	1	6	21	18	16
Guabira	12	3	3	6	15	24	12
Blooming	12	3	2	7	13	20	11

BOLIVIA – APERTURA 1ST STAGE – GP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bolivar	12	9	1	2	23	11	28
Oriente	12	7	1	4	21	10	22
Wilstermann	12	5	3	4	17	17	18
Potosi	12	5	1	6	11	19	16
La Paz	12	4	2	6	18	20	14
Mamore	12	4	0	8	15	25	12

Top three in both groups entered winners (championship) group; bottom three in both groups entered losers group

Winners group

BOLIVIA – APERTURA – WINNERS GROUP

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Aurora	8	4	2	2	16	11	14
Oriente	8	4	1	3	15	10	13
Wilstermann	7	3	2	2	9	9	11
Bolivar	8	3	2	3	10	11	11
The Strongest	8	2	3	3	9	10	9
San Jose	7	1	2	4	10	18	5

Standings on June 3

Losers group

BOLIVIA – APERTURA – LOSERS GROUP

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Blooming	7	5	1	1	15	7	16
Universitario	8	4	2	2	17	10	14
Potosi	7	4	1	2	16	12	13
La Paz	8	2	2	4	11	13	8
Mamore	8	2	2	4	9	17	8
Guabira	8	2	0	6	9	18	6

Standings on June 3

BRAZIL

May 8: Botafogo 3 Santos 3; Goianiense 0 Gremio 0; Palmeiras 1 Vitoria 0.
May 9: Flamengo 1 Sao Paulo 1; Mineiro 2 Vasco da Gama 1; Internacional 1 Cruzeiro 2; Corinthians 2 Paranaense 1; Ceara 1 Fluminense 0; Guarani 1 Goias 0; Avai 6 Gremio Prudente 1.
May 15: Vitoria 1 Flamengo 1; Fluminense 1 Goianiense 0; Gremio Prudente 4 Mineiro 0.
May 16: Sao Paulo 1 Botafogo 2; Gremio 1 Corinthians 2; Goias 2 Internacional 3; Santos 1 Ceara 1; Vasco da Gama 0 Palmeiras 0; Cruzeiro 2 Avai 2; Paranaense 2 Guarani 2.
May 22: Goianiense 1 Santos 2; Palmeiras 4 Gremio 2; Botafogo 3 Goias 0.
May 23: Corinthians 1 Fluminense 0; Mineiro 3 Paranaense 1; Internacional 0 Sao Paulo 2; Ceara 1 Vitoria 0; Avai 2 Vasco da Gama 0; Flamengo 3 Gremio Prudente 1; Guarani 2 Cruzeiro 2.
May 26: Vitoria 4 Mineiro 3; Gremio 3 Avai 0; Fluminense 2 Flamengo 1; Sao Paulo 1 Palmeiras 0; Gremio Prudente 2 Corinthians 2; Cruzeiro 1 Botafogo 0; Santos 3 Guarani 1.
May 27: Vasco da Gama 3 Internacional 2; Paranaense 2 Goianiense 1; Goias 0 Ceara 0.
May 29: Flamengo 1 Gremio 1; Palmeiras 0 Gremio Prudente 0; Avai 0 Vitoria 0.
May 30: Corinthians 4 Santos 2; Guarani 0 Sao Paulo 0; Mineiro 1 Fluminense 3; Internacional 4 Paranaense 1; Ceara 1 Cruzeiro 0; Goianiense 1 Goias 3; Botafogo 1 Vasco da Gama 1.
June 2: Paranaense 3 Botafogo 2; Fluminense 2 Vitoria 1; Gremio Prudente 1 Goianiense 0; Ceara 2 Avai 0; Palmeiras 0 Flamengo 1; Goias 2 Sao Paulo 1; Cruzeiro 0 Santos 0.

BRAZIL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ceara	6	4	2	0	6	1	14
Corinthians	5	4	1	0	11	6	13
Fluminense	6	4	0	2	8	5	12
Flamengo	6	2	3	1	8	6	9
Santos	6	2	3	1	11	10	9
Cruzeiro	6	2	3	1	7	6	9
Botafogo	6	2	2	2	11	9	8
Avai	6	2	2	2	10	8	8
Sao Paulo	6	2	2	2	6	5	8
Palmeiras	6	2	2	2	5	4	8
G Prudente	6	2	2	2	9	11	8
Goias	6	2	1	3	7	9	7
Paranaense	6	2	1	3	10	14	7
Internacional	5	2	0	3	10	10	6
Mineiro	5	2	0	3	9	13	6
Guarani	5	1	3	1	6	7	6
Gremio	5	1	2	2	7	7	5
Vitoria	6	1	2	3	6	8	5
Vasco	5	1	2	2	5	7	5
Goianiense	6	0	1	5	3	9	1

CHILE

Apertura

CHILE – APERTURA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Colo Colo	14	10	2	2	34	13	32
Univ Chile	13	9	1	3	36	19	28
Univ Catolica	14	8	3	3	27	16	27
Espanola	15	6	7	2	23	19	25
O'Higgins	14	6	4	4	18	12	22
Everton	14	6	3	5	19	16	21
Cobresal	15	6	3	6	26	26	21
Huachipato	14	5	5	4	18	17	20
San Felipe	15	5	4	6	17	20	19
Nublense	15	4	7	4	26	30	19
Wanderers	15	4	6	5	25	21	18
Audax Italiano	14	5	2	7	27	35	17
Palestino	15	4	4	7	15	18	16
Cobreloa	14	3	6	5	16	18	15
U Concepcion	14	3	6	5	18	22	15
Morning	15	3	5	7	13	22	14
La Serena	15	3	3	9	16	40	12
San Luis	15	2	5	8	19	29	11

Standings on June 3

ALGERIA

Seventh heaven

MC Alger were crowned Algerian champions for the seventh time in their history following their 4-0 victory over MSP Batna. They will now enter next season's CAF Champions League, along with Entente Setif.

CA Batna, MSP Batna and NA Hussein-Dey have all been relegated.

BOTSWANA

Rollers do the double

Township Rollers completed the league and cup double for the first time since 2005.

DR CONGO

Champions kicked out

African champions TP Mazembe were thrown out of the CECAFA Club Cup after fighting broke out during their game against APR of Rwanda.

Tresor Mputu, who had a goal disallowed for invited guests Mazembe, was sent off after aiming a kick at the ref and, as the dispute escalated, the match was abandoned.

EGYPT

Africa's top team

Al Ahly clinched their sixth consecutive league championship with a 3-0

Simply the best...Al Ahly

COLOMBIA

Apertura

Regular season

COLOMBIA – APERTURA REGULAR – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tolima	18	10	4	4	36	22	34
Ind Medellin	18	9	6	3	29	17	33
Junior	18	9	5	4	28	17	32
La Equidad	18	9	4	5	29	25	31
Dep Cali	18	9	3	6	28	20	30
Ind Santa Fe	18	9	3	6	25	23	30
Chico	18	8	5	5	25	24	29
Nacional	18	9	1	8	28	24	28
Cartagena	18	8	4	6	24	26	28
Once Caldas	18	7	4	7	32	28	25
Huila	18	6	6	6	30	26	24
Envigado	18	6	5	7	23	30	23
Cucuta	18	5	5	8	14	21	20
Millonarios	18	5	4	9	22	29	19
Pereira	18	4	6	8	23	28	18
America	18	4	4	10	18	28	16
Cortulua	18	4	3	11	19	32	15
Quindio	18	4	2	12	9	22	14

Top four qualified for championship semi-finals

Semi-finals

1st legs - May 19/20; 2nd legs - May 22/23
Junior v Ind Medellin 3-1, 0-1 (agg 3-2)
La Equidad v Tolima 2-2, 1-1 (agg 3-3; La Equidad 3-1 on pens)

Final, 1st leg

May 26
La Equidad 1 (Sheput 12)
Junior 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Machado

Final, 2nd leg

June 2
Junior 3 (Bacca 11, 87, Cortes 17)
La Equidad 1 (Castro 47)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 50,000. **Ref:** Roldan
Junior 3-2 on agg

ECUADOR

1st stage

ECUADOR – 1ST STAGE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona	16	9	6	1	17	7	33
LDU	16	8	8	0	23	6	32
Emelec	16	9	4	3	23	19	31
Dep Quito	15	7	4	4	20	16	25
Cuenca	15	5	7	3	17	13	22
Independiente	16	4	8	4	22	22	20
Manta	16	3	9	4	17	19	18
Espoli	16	5	3	8	18	26	18
El Nacional	16	2	7	7	20	22	13
Olmedo	16	2	6	8	12	20	12
Univ Catolica	16	2	6	8	13	22	12
Macara	16	2	6	8	15	25	12

Standings on June 3

PARAGUAY

Apertura

PARAGUAY – APERTURA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guarani	22	15	4	3	43	20	49
Cerro Porteno	22	14	3	5	37	23	45
Olimpia	22	11	6	5	32	18	39
Libertad	22	11	5	6	33	15	38
Rubio Nu	22	10	8	4	36	25	38
Nacional	22	10	5	7	31	22	35
Luqueno	22	5	10	7	26	30	25
Sol America	22	7	4	11	27	39	25
Trinidense	22	4	7	11	19	34	19
3 de Febrero	22	5	4	13	17	32	19
Colombia	22	4	5	13	21	40	17
Tacuary	22	3	5	14	20	44	14

PERU

First stage

PERU – FIRST STAGE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
San Martin	16	11	3	2	36	15	36
Cesar Vallejo	16	10	3	3	33	16	33
S Cristal	16	8	4	4	26	20	28
Leon	16	9	1	6	23	17	28
Alianza Lima	16	8	3	5	26	19	27
Universitario	16	8	2	6	23	14	26
Juan Aurich	16	7	4	5	22	17	25
Inti Gas	16	7	2	7	20	18	23
Huancayo	16	6	3	7	28	25	21
Jose Galvez	16	4	6	6	11	19	18
Total Chalaco	16	4	5	7	16	23	17
Melgar	16	3	7	6	19	25	16
Cienciano*	16	5	3	8	17	25	16
Sport Boys	16	4	3	9	15	29	15
CNI	16	3	3	10	17	33	12
Al Atletico	16	2	6	8	8	25	12

Standings on June 3
**2pts deducted for failing to pay a former player*

URUGUAY

Clausura

URUGUAY – CLAUSURA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Penarol	15	14	1	0	40	15	43
Cerro	15	9	2	4	28	18	29
Fenix	15	8	5	2	21	11	29
Nacional	15	8	3	4	27	15	27
River Plate	15	6	5	4	31	19	23
C Espanol	15	6	4	5	24	20	22
Liverpool	15	6	4	5	22	21	22
Rampla	15	6	4	5	18	18	22
Racing	15	6	1	8	18	29	19
Tacuarembo	15	5	3	7	22	28	18
Defensor	15	5	2	8	21	28	17
Danubio	15	5	1	9	21	25	16
Wanderers	15	4	3	8	25	26	15
Cerrito (R*)	15	4	2	9	17	27	14
Cerro Largo (R*)	15	3	3	9	13	34	12
Atenas (R*)	15	3	1	11	16	30	10

**Relegation based on points average in two most recent seasons*

Overall championship play-offs

Semi-final

(apertura winners, Nacional v clausura winners, Penarol; single-leg tie)
May 12: Penarol 0 Nacional 2.

Final, 1st leg

(semi-final winners, Nacional v aggregate season table winners, Penarol)
May 15
Nacional 0
Penarol 1 (Pacheco 22)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Martinez
Sent off: Calzada 63min, Cabrera 77min (both Nacional); Urretavizcaya 71min, Olivera 90min (both Penarol)

Final, 2nd leg

May 18
Penarol 1 (Aguirregaray 67)
Nacional 1 (Lembo 34)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 40,000. **Ref:** Ubriaco
Sent off: Ramirez (Penarol) 79min; Blanco (Nacional) 87min
Penarol, with 4pts from the two legs, won the championship

VENEZUELA

Clausura

VENEZUELA – CLAUSURA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Caracas	17	10	5	2	31	16	35
Tachira	17	10	5	2	28	15	35
Italia	17	10	3	4	36	17	33
Lara	17	7	8	2	26	17	29
Zulia	17	9	2	6	26	21	29
Trujillanos	17	8	4	5	21	16	28
Zamora	17	8	4	5	26	22	28
El Vigia	17	7	3	7	26	29	24
Anzoategui	17	6	5	6	17	20	23
Aragua	17	7	1	9	22	27	22
Esppor	17	6	3	8	27	27	21
Monagas	17	5	4	8	19	30	19
Carabobo	17	4	6	7	16	23	18
Estudiantes	17	3	8	6	17	23	17
Mineros	17	3	8	6	17	24	17
Llaneros (R*)	17	4	3	10	20	28	15
Yaracuyanos	17	3	5	9	20	28	14
C'tro Italo (R*)	17	3	3	11	17	29	12

**Relegation determined by aggregate points from apertura and clausura*

Overall championship play-off

(apertura winners, Tachira v clausura winners, Caracas)

1st leg

May 23
Caracas 1 (Romero 15)
Tachira 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 18,200. **Ref:** Lopez

2nd leg

May 30
Tachira 1 (Villafraz 38)
Caracas 4 (Cichero 11, Gomez 13, Castellin 61, Guerra 67)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 40,000. **Ref:** Hoyos
Caracas 5-1 on agg

CONCACAF

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Semi-finals

1st legs - March 30/31; 2nd legs - April 6/7
Pumas UNAM (Mex) v Cruz Azul (Mex)
1-0, 0-5 (agg 1-5)
Toluca (Mex) v Pachuca (Mex)
1-1, 0-1 (agg 1-2)

Final

1st leg

Apr 21
Cruz Azul 2 (Villa 20, Rodriguez og 24)
Pachuca 1 (Alvarez 69)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 16,186. **Ref:** Archundia (Mex)
Cruz Azul: Corona - Lozano, Brown, Dominguez, Chavez (Castro 88), Cervantes, Riveros, Gutierrez, Villa, Biancucchi (Villaluz 67), Orozco (Ortiz 74).
Sent off: Dominguez 79min.
Pachuca: Calero - Lopez, Rodriguez, G Torres (Montes 84), Rojas, Alvarez, Martinez, Brambila (Cacho 60), J Torres, Mendivil (Manso 32), Benitez.

2nd leg

Apr 28
Pachuca 1 (Benitez 90+2)
Cruz Azul 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Rodriguez (Mex)
Agg 2-2. Pachuca on away goals
Pachuca: Calero - Perez, Munoz, Rodriguez, Rojas (Cortes 87), Alvarez, Martinez, J Torres (Manon 80), Manso, Cvitanich (Mendivil 55), Benitez.
Cruz Azul: Corona - Lozano, Pinto, Brown, Cervantes, Castro (Chavez 77), Riveros, Gutierrez, Villa, Biancucchi (Lugo 60), Orozco (Vela 68).

2010-11 edition draw

Preliminary round

Brujas (CR) v Joe Public (T&T)
CD FAS (EIS) v Xelaju (Gtm)
LA Galaxy (USA) v Puerto Rico Islanders (PR)
San Francisco (Pan) v Cruz Azul (Mex)
San Juan Jabloteh (T&T) v Santos Laguna (Mex)
Seattle Sounders (USA) v Metapan (EIS)
Tauro (Pan) v Marathon (Hnd)
Toronto (Can) v Motagua (Hnd)
1st legs - July 27-29; 2nd legs - August 3-5

Group stage

Group A
Arabe Unido (Pan)
Real Salt Lake (USA)
San Francisco OR Cruz Azul
Toronto OR Motagua

Group B
Brujas OR Joe Public
Columbus Crew (USA)
Municipal (Gtm)
San Juan Jabloteh OR Santos Laguna

Group C
Monterrey (Mex)
Saprissa (CR)
Seattle Sounders OR Metapan
Tauro OR Marathon

Group D
CD FAS OR Xelaju
LA Galaxy OR Puerto Rico Islanders
Olimpia (Hnd)
Toluca (Mex)

Group stage scheduled to start August 17-19

victory over relegated Mansoura. The Cairo side have now won their national title 35 times – more than any other club in Africa.

GHANA

Stars world record

Aduana Stars set a world record as they won the Ghana Premier League.

Having scored just 19 times in 30 games, their average of 0.6333 goals per match broke the previous world low of Turkish side Trabzonspor, who scored 25 in 30 matches, at an average of 0.8333, in 1979-80.

LIBYA

Six on the trot

Al Ittihad have become the first club to win six successive Libyan league titles. The Tripoli-based club wrapped up their latest championship with second-half goals from Muhammad Za'abia and Muhammad Al Qounawi in a 2-0 win over Al Najma.

MOROCCO

Wydad win league

Wydad won the championship on the final day of the season after Casablanca city rivals Raja, who were a point clear going into their last game, lost 1-0 away to FAR Rabat. That slip-up allowed Wydad to leapfrog them with a 1-0 success over FUS Rabat.

The joy of six...Al Ittihad

RWANDA

APR regional champs

APR were crowned CECAFA Club Cup champions after beating St George of Ethiopia 2-0. Kenya's Sofapaka were third with a 2-1 win over holders Atraco from Rwanda.

CANADA

CANADA – CHAMPIONSHIP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Toronto	4	2	2	0	3	0	8
Vancouver	4	0	4	0	2	2	4
Montreal	4	0	2	2	2	5	2

COSTA RICA

Clausura

Final, 1st leg

May 9
San Carlos 2 (Sanchez 8, 66)
Saprissa 4 (Martinez 24, Cordero 79, Arrieta 85, Guzman 90)
HT: 1-1
Sent off: Nunez (Saprissa) 71min

Final, 2nd leg

May 15
Saprissa 3 (Martinez 9, Loaiza 73, Aleman pen 80)
San Carlos 0
HT: 1-0
Saprissa 7-2 on agg

HONDURAS

Clausura

Final, 1st leg

May 2
Olimpia 3 (Tilguath 24, Rojas 40, 58)
Motagua 1 (Cabrita 73)
HT: 2-0

Final, 2nd leg

May 8
Motagua 1 (Welcome 38)
Olimpia 0
HT: 1-0
Olimpia 3-2 on agg

JAMAICA

Teams carried forward full record from the 33-round regular season

JAMAICA – CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Harbour View	38	23	8	7	53	27	77
Tivoli Gardens	38	18	12	8	58	32	66
Waterhouse	38	17	9	12	43	35	60
St George's	38	12	14	12	32	38	50
Boys Town	38	12	13	13	33	36	49
Village Utd	38	11	15	12	35	40	48

JAMAICA – RELEGATION GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Portmore Utd	38	11	14	13	24	28	47
Arnett Gdns	38	10	15	13	36	38	45
Ctrl Academy	38	9	16	13	33	34	43
Humble Lions	38	9	16	13	32	36	43
Rivoli Utd (R)	38	9	15	14	36	45	42
August (R)	38	9	9	20	28	54	36

MEXICO

Clausura

Regular season

Apr 3: Indios 1 Pachuca 2; Monterrey 1 Pumas 0; Cruz Azul 1 Queretaro 0; San Luis 0 Tigres 3; Morelia 1 Puebla 1; Atlas 3 Atlante 3.
Apr 4: Toluca 5 Tecos 0; Santos 0 Jaguares 3; Guadalajara 1 America 0.
Apr 9: Tecos 0 Tigres 0.
Apr 10: Jaguares 1 America 3; Queretaro 0 Toluca 1; Monterrey 1 San Luis 1; Pachuca 0 Atlas 2; Atlante 1 Cruz Azul 0; Guadalajara 0 Morelia 3.
Apr 11: Pumas 1 Santos 0; Puebla 1 Indios 2.
Apr 14: Tigres 2 Queretaro 1; Atlas 0 Puebla 2; Cruz Azul 2 Pachuca 2; San Luis 1 Tecos 1; Toluca 2 Atlante 0; Indios 1 Guadalajara 0; Morelia 1 Jaguares 2; America 0 Pumas 0; Santos 1 Monterrey 1.
Apr 17: Monterrey 2 America 1; Queretaro 1 Tecos 0; Jaguares 1 Indios 0; Guadalajara 0 Atlas 2; Atlante 1 Tigres 2; Pachuca 1 Toluca 1.
Apr 18: Puebla 4 Cruz Azul 1; Pumas 2 Morelia 0.
Apr 19: Santos 2 San Luis 1.
Apr 23: Tecos 3 Atlante 2.
Apr 24: Cruz Azul 1 Guadalajara 1; Tigres 1 Pachuca 2; Morelia 1 Monterrey 1; San Luis 3 Queretaro 0; Atlas 1 Jaguares 1.
Apr 25: Toluca 2 Puebla 1; Indios 2 Pumas 0; America 1 Santos 0.

MEXICO – CLAUSURA REGULAR – GP 1 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guadalajara	17	10	2	5	28	21	32
Toluca	17	8	6	3	27	15	30
Atlas	17	7	3	7	26	23	24
Queretaro	17	6	3	8	13	25	21
Indios	17	4	3	10	10	29	15
San Luis	17	3	5	9	18	29	14

MEXICO – CLAUSURA REGULAR – GP 2 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Monterrey	17	10	6	1	30	15	36
America	17	7	4	6	29	20	25
Morelia	17	7	4	6	22	13	25
Pachuca	17	7	4	6	27	26	25
Jaguares	17	4	7	6	22	24	19
Puebla	17	5	4	8	28	31	19

MEXICO – CLAUSURA REGULAR – GP 3 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Pumas	17	7	7	3	20	10	28
Santos	17	8	4	5	27	25	28
Cruz Azul	17	7	4	6	20	20	25
Tecos	17	5	4	8	26	32	19
Tigres	17	5	4	8	19	26	19
Atlante	17	4	4	9	21	29	16

Top two in each group and the two other teams with the best record qualified for quarter-finals

Quarter-finals

1st legs - May 1/2; 2nd legs - May 8/9
America v Toluca 2-2, 0-2 (agg 2-4)
Morelia v Guadalajara 4-2, 1-0 (agg 5-2)
Pachuca v Monterrey 1-0, 2-1 (agg 3-1)
Santos v Pumas 2-0, 0-1 (agg 2-1)

Semi-finals

1st legs - May 12; 2nd legs - May 15
Morelia v Santos 3-3, 1-7 (agg 4-10)
Pachuca v Toluca 2-2, 0-1 (agg 2-3)

Final, 1st leg

May 20
Santos 2 (Quintero 13, Vuoso 84)
Toluca 2 (Novaretti 22, Naelson 67)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Rodriguez
Sent off: De la Torre (Toluca) 90min

Final, 2nd leg

May 23
Toluca 0
Santos 0
Aet. **Ref:** Archundia
Agg 2-2. Toluca 4-3 on pens

UNITED STATES

Regular season

Apr 1: Houston 2 Salt Lake 1; Los Angeles 2 Chivas 0.
Apr 3: Colorado 2 Chicago 2; DC United 0 New England 2; Seattle 0 New York 1.
Apr 10: Chivas 2 New York 0; Philadelphia 3 DC United 2; New England 4 Toronto 1; Kansas City 1 Colorado 0; Houston 0 Los Angeles 2; Dallas 2 Columbus 2; Chicago 1 San Jose 2; Salt Lake 2 Seattle 2.
Apr 15: Toronto 2 Philadelphia 1.
Apr 17: Seattle 1 Kansas City 0; Houston 3 Chivas 0; New York 2 Dallas 1; DC United 0 Chicago 2; San Jose 2 New England 0; Los Angeles 2 Salt Lake 1.
Apr 18: Colorado 3 Toronto 1.
Apr 22: Dallas 2 Seattle 2.
Apr 24: New York 2 Philadelphia 1; New England 1 Colorado 2; Columbus 1 Salt Lake 0; Kansas City 0 Los Angeles 0; Chicago 2 Houston 0; Chivas 3 San Jose 2.
Apr 25: Toronto 2 Seattle 0.
May 1: DC United 0 New York 2; New England 1 Dallas 1; Houston 3 Kansas City 0; Chicago 1 Chivas 1; Salt Lake 2 Toronto 1; San Jose 1 Colorado 0; Los Angeles 3 Philadelphia 1; Seattle 1 Columbus 1.
May 5: DC United 2 Kansas City 1; New England 0 Chivas 4; Houston 0 Dallas 1; Colorado 0 Los Angeles 1.
May 8: Seattle 0 Los Angeles 4; Toronto 4 Chicago 1; Salt Lake 3 Philadelphia 0; Columbus 3 New England 2; Dallas 1 DC United 0; San Jose 4 New York 0; Chivas 0 Houston 2.
May 13: Salt Lake 3 Houston 1.
May 15: Philadelphia 1 Dallas 1; New England 0 San Jose 0; Columbus 1 Chivas 0; DC United 0 Colorado 1; New York 0 Seattle 1; Kansas City 2 Chicago 2; Los Angeles 0 Toronto 0.
May 20: New York 1 Columbus 3; Dallas 0 Los Angeles 1.
May 22: Seattle 0 San Jose 1; Toronto 1 New England 0; Houston 2 DC United 0; Chivas 1 Salt Lake 2.
May 23: Kansas City 0 Columbus 1.
May 27: Chicago 1 Dallas 1.
May 29: Columbus 0 Los Angeles 2; DC United 3 Chivas 2; New England 3 New York 2; Houston 2 Philadelphia 3; Colorado 1 Seattle 0; Salt Lake 4 Kansas City 1; San Jose 1 Toronto 3.
June 2: New York 2 Houston 1; San Jose 2 Columbus 2.

USA – REGULAR – EASTERN CONFERENCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Columbus	10	6	3	1	16	10	21
New York	11	6	0	5	13	16	18
Toronto	10	5	1	4	15	14	16
New England	11	3	2	6	13	17	11
Chicago	9	2	4	3	12	13	10
Kansas City	9	2	2	5	9	13	8
Philadelphia	8	2	1	5	10	17	7
DC United	10	2	0	8	7	20	6

USA – REGULAR – WESTERN CONFERENCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Los Angeles	11	9	2	0	18	2	29
Salt Lake	10	6	1	3	21	11	19
San Jose	10	5	2	3	15	12	17
Colorado	9	5	1	3	10	7	16
Houston	12	5	1	6	17	15	16
Dallas	10	2	6	2	11	11	12
Seattle	11	3	3	5	9	14	12
Chivas	11	3	1	7	13	17	10

AFRICA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

1st round

1st legs - March 19-21; 2nd legs - April 2-5
Africa Sports (IvC) v Al Hilal (Sud)
0-0, 1-4 (agg 1-4)
Al Ittihad (Lby) v Difaa Jadida (Mor)
1-1, 1-1 (agg 2-2; Al Ittihad 4-3 on pens)
APR (Rwa) v TP Mazembe (DRC)
1-0, 0-2 (agg 1-2)
Club Africain (Tun) v JS Kabylie (Alg)
1-1, 0-1 (agg 1-2)
Curepipe Starlight (Mts) v Gaborone United (Bot)
0-3, 0-3 (agg 0-6)
Djoliba (Mli) v ASC Linguere (Sen)
1-0, 0-1 (agg 1-1; Djoliba 4-3 on pens)
Esperance Tunis (Tun) v ASFA Yennenga (BuF)
4-1, 3-1 (agg 7-2)
Gazelle (Chd) v Al Merreikh (Sud)
1-1, 0-2 (agg 1-3)
Gunners (Zim) v Al Ahly (Egy)
1-0, 0-2 (agg 1-2)
Ismaili (Egy) v Stade Tamponnaise (Reu)
3-1, 0-1 (agg 3-2)
Raja Casablanca (Mor) v Petro Atletico (Ang)
1-1, 0-1 (agg 1-2)
St Eloi Lupopo (DRC) v Dynamos (Zim)
0-1, 0-1 (agg 0-2)
SuperSport United (SAf) v Ferroviario (Moz)
3-0, 0-2 (agg 3-2)
Tiko United (Cam) v Heartland (Nig)
2-2, 1-1 (agg 3-3; Heartland on away goals)
Union Douala (Cam) v ES Setif (Alg)
0-2, 0-5 (agg 0-7)
Zanaco (Zam) v ASEC Abidjan (IvC)
1-0, 1-1 (agg 2-1)

2nd round

1st legs - April 23-25; 2nd legs - May 8/9
Al Hilal v Ismaili
0-1, 1-3 (agg 1-4)
Al Ittihad v Al Ahly
2-0, 0-3 (agg 2-3)
Djoliba v TP Mazembe
0-1, 0-3 (agg 0-4)
Dynamos v Gaborone United
4-1, 0-1 (agg 4-2)
ES Setif v Zanaco
1-0, 2-2 (agg 3-2)
Esperance Tunis v Al Merreikh
3-0, 1-1 (agg 4-1)
JS Kabylie v Petro Atletico
2-0, 1-2 (agg 3-2)
SuperSport United v Heartland
1-1, 1-3 (agg 2-4)
Winners enter group stage; losers enter Confederation Cup at intermediate round stage

Group stage draw

Group A
Dynamos
ES Setif
Esperance Tunis
TP Mazembe

Group B
Al Ahly
Heartland
Ismaili
JS Kabylie

Matchdays: July 16-18, July 30-Aug 1, Aug 13-15, Aug 27-29, Sep 10-12, Sep 17-19

Top two in each group qualify for semi-finals

BAHRAIN

Al Muharraq slip up

Al Muharraq's hopes of a fifth consecutive title were dashed when they lost 2-0 to Al Riffa. Al Ahli stepped in to clinch their first silverware since 1996 by beating Manama 3-1.

INDIA

Dempo make it four

Dempo claimed their fourth I-League title with a 1-0 win over Shillong Lajong, thanks to a goal from Anthony Pereira.

INDONESIA

New name on trophy

Arema Malang won their first Indonesian Super League title with a 1-1 draw against PSPS Pekanbaru moving them four points clear of defending champions Persipura Jayapura with one game to play.

IRAN

Sepahan's success

Sepahan are the first club from outside Tehran to win the Iran Pro League more than once.

Persepolis beat Gostaresh Foolad 4-1 on aggregate in the Final to win the Iranian Cup.

KUWAIT

Double victory

Al Qadsia retained their league crown with a 2-0 victory at Kazma, and then lifted the Kuwait Prince Cup by beating Kuwait SC 4-1 on penalties.

Cup winner... Al Qadsia captain Nohair Al Shammari

LEBANON

Al Ahed's title

Al Ahed won the Lebanese Premier League by a comfortable margin over last year's champions Al Nijmeh.

Al Ansar won the Lebanese FA Cup.

CONFEDERATION CUP

1st round

1st legs - March 19-21; 2nd legs - April 2-4

AC Leopards (Con) v Cotonsport (Cam)
3-1, 0-2 (agg 3-3; Cotonsport on away goals)
Academica Soyo (Ang) v Enyimba (Nig)
2-0, 0-3 (agg 2-3)
Al Ahly Tripoli (Lby) v CS Sfaxien (Tun)
0-0, 0-1 (agg 0-1)
AS Fan (Ngr) v Etoile Sahel (Tun)
1-0, 1-2 (agg 2-2; AS Fan on away goals)
Banks (Eth) v Haras Hedood (Egy)
1-1, 0-5 (agg 1-6)
Baraka Djoma (Gui) v FUS Rabat (Mor)
0-0, 0-1 (agg 0-1)
Caps United (Zim) v Moroka Swallows (SAf)
1-1, 1-0 (agg 2-1)
CO Bamako (Mli) v Primeiro Agosto (Ang)
0-0, 0-3 (agg 0-3)
CR Belouizdad (Alg) v FAR Rabat (Mor)
1-0, 1-1 (agg 2-1)
DC Motema Pembe (DRC) v FC105 (Gab)
0-0, 1-0 (agg 1-0)
El Amal (Sud) v Costa do Sol (Moz)
4-2, 2-3 (agg 6-5)
Lengthens (Zim) v Simba (Tan)
0-3, 1-2 (agg 1-5)
Panthere Nde (Cam) v AS Vita Club (DRC)
1-1, 2-3 (agg 3-4)
Petrojet (Egy) v Khartoum-3 (Sud)
3-0, 2-1 (agg 5-1)
Sewe Sport (IvC) v Stade Malien (Mli)
2-0, 0-2 (agg 2-2; Stade Malien 4-3 on pens)
Warri Wolves (Nig) v Zesco United (Zam)
3-0, 0-2 (agg 3-2)

2nd round

1st legs - April 23-25; 2nd legs - May 7-9

AS Fan v DC Motema Pembe
1-0, 0-0 (agg 1-0)
AS Vita Club v Enyimba
3-0, 0-3 (agg 3-3; Enyimba 5-4 on pens)
Cotonsport v Primeiro Agosto
1-2, 0-0 (agg 1-2)
El Amal v CR Belouizdad
1-0, 0-2 (agg 1-2)
FUS Rabat v Stade Malien
2-0, 0-0 (agg 2-0)
Petrojet v CS Sfaxien
1-1, 0-1 (agg 1-2)
Simba v Haras Hedood
2-1, 1-5 (agg 3-6)
Warri Wolves v Caps United
2-1, 0-2 (agg 2-3)

Intermediate round draw

(losing teams from the Champions League 2nd round enter at this stage)
Al Hilal v Caps United
Al Ittihad v Primeiro Agosto
Al Merreikh v AS Fan
Djoliba v CR Belouizdad
Gaborone United v Haras Hedood
Petro Atletico v CS Sfaxien
SuperSport United v FUS Rabat
Zanaco v Enyimba
1st legs - July 16-18; 2nd legs - July 30-Aug 1

Winners qualify for group stage

ALGERIA

ALGERIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
MC Alger	34	18	12	4	50	23	66
ES Setif	34	17	12	5	51	32	63
JS Kabylie	34	15	9	10	39	27	54
USM Alger	34	14	11	9	47	33	53
El Harrach	34	13	13	8	46	33	52
JSM Bejaia	34	13	13	8	47	35	52
USM Annaba	34	12	13	9	40	35	49
WA Tlemcen	34	12	10	12	43	43	46
Belouizdad	34	12	10	12	37	38	46
Bordj Bou A	34	12	10	12	41	45	46
AS El Khroub	34	12	9	13	37	45	45
ASO Chlef	34	12	7	15	38	41	43
MC El Eulma	34	11	10	13	33	36	43
USM Blida	34	11	10	13	30	33	43
MC Oran	34	10	11	13	33	42	41
CA Batna (R)	34	10	7	17	27	40	37
MSP Batna (R)	34	5	9	20	23	54	24
Huss'n-Dey (R)	34	3	10	21	22	49	19

EGYPT

EGYPT – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ahly	30	18	11	1	47	23	65
Zamalek	30	16	7	7	43	26	55
Ismaili	30	11	15	4	34	25	48
Shorta	30	12	11	7	35	24	47
Petrojet	30	13	8	9	42	37	47
Haras Hedood	30	11	12	7	39	31	45
Entag Harby	30	11	8	11	36	32	41
ENPPI	30	10	11	9	29	35	41
Jaish	30	9	13	8	42	38	40
Ittihad	30	9	8	13	27	36	35
Mokawloon	30	7	13	10	36	34	34
Gouna	30	8	10	12	26	32	34
Masry	30	6	16	8	28	35	34
Mehalla (R)	30	7	10	13	17	30	31
Mansoura (R)	30	3	10	17	21	37	19
Assyut (R)	30	4	7	19	29	56	19

GHANA

GHANA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Aduana Stars	30	15	8	7	19	10	53
AshantiGold	30	15	8	7	36	22	53
Hearts of Oak	30	13	8	9	39	30	47
Heart of Lions	30	13	7	10	38	34	46
Asante Kotoko	30	11	11	8	35	27	44
All Stars	30	12	8	10	33	33	44
Arsenal	30	12	7	11	27	33	43
Chelsea	30	11	9	10	26	20	42
Kessben*	30	14	3	13	39	44	42
King Faisal	30	12	6	12	35	27	42
Real Tamale	30	11	7	12	31	36	40
Edubiase	30	11	6	13	32	33	39
Liberty Pro's	30	10	8	12	32	29	38
G Olympics (R)	30	9	7	14	31	40	34
11 Wise (R)	30	8	7	15	38	47	31
Hasaacas (R)	30	5	6	19	28	54	21

**3pts deducted*

MOROCCO

MOROCCO – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wydad C	30	15	9	6	36	22	54
Raja	30	14	10	6	39	26	52
El Jadida	30	12	14	4	30	17	50
KAC	30	10	14	6	27	19	44
Khouribga	30	11	10	9	30	26	43
HUS Agadir	30	10	11	9	33	31	41
FAR Rabat	30	10	10	10	21	20	40
MAS Fes	30	9	12	9	29	26	39
Kenitra	30	10	8	12	28	30	38
MA Tetouan	30	7	15	8	18	18	36
Wydad Fes	30	9	9	12	33	41	36
FUS Rabat	30	9	9	12	24	30	36
El Massira	30	8	10	12	26	33	34
OC Safi	30	8	9	13	29	37	33
Khemisset (R)	30	7	12	11	15	22	33
AS Sale (R)	30	4	12	14	15	35	24

TUNISIA

TUNISIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Esperance T	26	16	6	4	56	24	54
Club Africain	26	14	8	4	28	15	50
Etoile Sahel	26	13	7	6	41	27	46
Bizertin	26	11	7	8	36	33	40
Stade Tunisien	26	10	9	7	22	16	39
Sfaxien	26	10	7	9	32	26	37
Olympique	26	8	8	10	28	32	32
Kairouanaise	26	9	4	13	22	34	31
Hammam-Lif	26	8	6	12	30	32	30
Esperance Z	26	6	11	9	17	26	29
Gafsa	26	7	7	12	29	39	28
Ham-Sousse	26	7	6	13	28	36	27
Kasserine (R)	26	8	3	15	22	46	27
Monastir (R)	26	5	11	10	25	30	26

ASIA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A

Mar 31: Al Gharafa (Qat) 1 Esteghlal Tehran (Irn) 1; Al Jazira (UAE) 0 Al Ahli (Sau) 2.
Apr 14: Al Gharafa 4 Al Jazira 2; Esteghlal Tehran 2 Al Ahli 1.
Apr 28: Al Ahli 0 Al Gharafa 1; Al Jazira 2 Esteghlal Tehran 1.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Gharafa	6	4	1	1	11	9	13
Esteghlal	6	3	2	1	9	5	11
Al Ahli	6	2	0	4	11	9	6
Al Jazira	6	1	1	4	6	14	4

Group B

Mar 30: Al Ittihad (Sau) 4 Al Wahda (UAE) 0; Bunyodkor (Uzb) 0 Zob-Ahan (Irn) 1.
Apr 14: Al Ittihad 1 Bunyodkor 1; Al Wahda 1 Zob-Ahan 0.
Apr 28: Bunyodkor 4 Al Wahda 1; Zob-Ahan 1 Al Ittihad 0.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zob-Ahan	6	4	1	1	8	3	13
Bunyodkor	6	3	1	2	10	7	10
Al Ittihad	6	2	2	2	9	7	8
Al Wahda	6	1	0	5	3	13	3

Group C

Mar 31: Al Shabab (Sau) 3 Al Ain (UAE) 2; Sepahan (Irn) 2 Pakhtakor (Uzb) 0.
Apr 13: Pakhtakor 3 Al Ain 2; Sepahan 1 Al Shabab 0.
Apr 27: Al Ain 2 Sepahan 0; Al Shabab 2 Pakhtakor 1.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP C – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Shabab	6	3	1	2	10	8	10
Pakhtakor	6	3	0	3	8	10	9
Sepahan	6	2	2	2	5	5	8
Al Ain	6	2	1	3	8	8	7

Group D

Mar 30: Al Ahli (UAE) 2 Al Hilal (Sau) 3; Mes (Irn) 3 Al Sadd (Qat) 1.
Apr 13: Al Ahli 2 Mes 1; Al Hilal 0 Al Sadd 0.
Apr 27: Al Sadd 2 Al Ahli 2; Mes 3 Al Hilal 1.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP D – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Hilal	6	3	2	1	11	7	11
Mes	6	3	0	3	13	13	9
Al Sadd	6	2	2	2	12	9	8
Al Ahli	6	1	2	3	9	16	5

Group E

Mar 31: Beijing Guoan (Chn) 0 Songnam Ilhwa (SKo) 1; Melbourne Victory (Aus) 1 Kawasaki Frontale (Jap) 0.
Apr 14: Kawasaki Frontale 3 Songnam Ilhwa 0; Melbourne Victory 0 Beijing Guoan 0.
Apr 28: Beijing Guoan 2 Kawasaki Frontale 0; Songnam Ilhwa 3 Melbourne Victory 2.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP E – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Songnam	6	5	0	1	11	6	15
Beijing	6	3	1	2	7	5	10
Kawasaki	6	2	0	4	8	8	6
Melbourne	6	1	1	4	3	10	4

Group F

Mar 30: Chonbuk Motors (SKo) 1 Changchun Yatai (Chn) 0; Persipura Jayapura (Ins) 1 Kashima Antlers (Jap) 3.
Apr 14: Changchun Yatai 0 Kashima Antlers 1; Chonbuk Motors 8 Persipura Jayapura 0.
Apr 28: Kashima Antlers 2 Chonbuk Motors 1; Persipura Jayapura 2 Changchun Yatai 0.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP F – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kashima	6	6	0	0	14	3	18
Chonbuk	6	4	0	2	17	6	12
Changchun	6	1	0	5	10	7	3
Persipura	6	1	0	5	4	29	3

Group G

Mar 31: Gamba Osaka (Jap) 3 Singapore Armed Forces (Sin) 0; Suwon Bluewings (SKo) 2 Henan Jianye (Chn) 0.
Apr 13: Gamba Osaka 2 Suwon Bluewings 1; Singapore Armed Forces 2 Henan Jianye 1.
Apr 27: Henan Jianye 1 Gamba Osaka 1; Suwon Bluewings 6 Singapore Armed Forces 2.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP G – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Suwon	6	4	1	1	13	4	13
Gamba	6	3	3	0	11	5	12
S Armed Forces	6	1	1	4	6	16	4
Henan	6	0	3	3	3	8	3

OMAN

Draw is enough

Al Suwaiq were crowned Omani league champions after drawing 1-1 with Al Nasr.

QATAR

Alves on target

Al Rayyan clinched the Qatar Emir Cup with a 1-0 victory over Umm Salal. Afonso Alves scored the winning goal.

Scorer...Alves

SAUDI ARABIA

League champs beaten

Al Ittihad won the Champion's Cup, beating league champs Al Hilal in a penalty shoot-out after a goalless 120 minutes.

SOUTH KOREA

Biggest attendance

A record K-League crowd of 60,747 saw Seoul thrash Seongnam Ilhwa Chunma 4-0.

SYRIA

Last eight of AFC Cup

Al Ittihad knocked defending champions Kuwait SC out of the AFC Cup, winning 5-4 on penalties, to secure a place in the quarter-finals. Al Karamah, who lost to Kuwait SC in last year's Final, are also through to the last eight after beating Uzbekistan's Nasaf 1-0. Elsewhere, Al Jaish won the Syrian league title.

Cup clash...Al-Ittihad's Moutaz Kailoni (left) takes on Kuwait SC

Group H

Mar 30: Sanfrecce Hiroshima (Jap) 1 Adelaide United (Aus) 0; Shandong Luneng (Chn) 1 Pohang Steelers (SKo) 2.
Apr 13: Pohang Steelers 0 Adelaide United 0; Shandong Luneng 2 Sanfrecce Hiroshima 3.
Apr 27: Adelaide United 0 Shandong Luneng 1; Sanfrecce Hiroshima 4 Pohang Steelers 3.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP H – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Adelaide	6	3	1	2	6	4	10
Pohang	6	3	1	2	8	7	10
Sanfrecce	6	3	0	3	11	11	9
Shandong	6	2	0	4	5	8	6

Top two in each group qualified for 1st knockout round

1st knockout round

(single-leg ties)
May 11: Al Gharafa 1 Pakhtakor 0; Al Shabab 3 Esteghlal Tehran 2; Songnam Ilhwa 3 Gamba Osaka 0; Suwon Bluewings 2 Beijing Guoan 0.
May 12: Adelaide United 2 Chonbuk Motors 3 (aet); Al Hilal 3 Bunyodkor 0; Kashima Antlers 0 Pohang Steelers 1; Zob-Ahan 1 Mes 0.

Quarter-finals draw

Al Hilal v Al Gharafa
Chonbuk Motors v Al Shabab
Songnam Ilhwa v Suwon Bluewings
Zob-Ahan v Pohang Steelers
1st legs - September 15; 2nd legs - September 22

AFC CUP

Group A

AFC CUP – GROUP A – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Kar'ah (Syr)	6	4	2	0	12	4	14
Shabab O (Jor)	6	3	3	0	13	5	12
Saham (Oma)	6	1	2	3	5	11	5
Ahli S (Yem)	6	0	1	5	3	13	1

Group B

AFC CUP – GROUP B – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
K'wait SC (Kuw)	4	2	2	0	13	5	8
C'chill Bros (Ind)	4	2	1	1	6	10	7
Al Hilal (Yem)	4	0	1	3	3	7	1

Group C

AFC CUP – GROUP C – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kazma (Kuw)	6	4	1	1	6	3	13
Nasaf (Uzb)	6	3	2	1	12	4	11
Al Jaish (Syr)	6	2	2	2	10	8	8
Al Ahed (Leb)	6	0	1	5	5	18	1

Group D

AFC CUP – GROUP D – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Qadsia (Kuw)	6	4	2	0	14	5	14
Al Ittihad (Syr)	6	3	1	2	10	8	10
Al Nejmeh (Leb)	6	3	1	2	12	8	10
E Bengal (Ind)	6	0	0	6	5	20	0

Group E

AFC CUP – GROUP E – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Rayyan (Qat)	6	5	0	1	16	7	15
Al Riffa (Bhn)	6	4	1	1	7	5	13
Al Wehdat (Jor)	6	2	1	3	8	10	7
Al Nahda (Oma)	6	0	0	6	3	12	0

Group F

AFC CUP – GROUP F – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sriwijaya (Ins)	6	4	1	1	17	3	13
Binh D'ng (Vie)	6	4	1	1	14	2	13
Selangor (Mly)	6	1	1	4	7	16	4
Victory (Mdv)	6	1	1	4	2	19	4

Group G

AFC CUP – GROUP G – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
S'th China (HK)	6	4	1	1	12	5	13
Mu'thong (Tha)	6	3	2	1	12	7	11
VB (Mdv)	6	3	0	3	12	11	9
Persiwa (Ins)	6	0	1	5	8	21	1

Group H

AFC CUP – GROUP H – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Da Nang (Vie)	6	4	2	0	12	6	14
Thai Port (Tha)	6	3	2	1	8	5	11
Geylang (Sin)	6	0	4	2	7	9	4
Tai Po (HK)	6	0	2	4	3	10	2

Top two in each group qualified for 1st knockout rnd

1st knockout round

(single-leg ties)
May 11: Al Karamah 1 Nasaf 0; Al Rayyan 1 Muangthong United 1 (aet; Muangthong 4-2 on pens); Kazma 1 Shabab Al Ordon 1 (aet; Kazma 6-5 on pens); South China 1 Al Riffa 3.
May 12: Al Qadsia 2 Churchill Brothers 1; Da Nang 4 Binh Duong 3 (aet); Kuwait SC 1 Al Ittihad 1 (aet; Al Ittihad 5-4 on pens); Sriwijaya 1 Thai Port 4.

Quarter-finals draw

Al Ittihad v Kazma
Al Karamah v Muangthong United
Al Riffa v Da Nang
Thai Port v Al Qadsia
1st legs - September 14; 2nd legs - September 21

IRAN

IRAN – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sepahan	34	19	10	5	67	30	67
Zob-Ahan	34	16	13	5	48	29	61
Esteghlal T	34	16	11	7	49	32	59
Persepolis	34	13	14	7	46	40	53
Steel Azin	34	13	13	8	55	49	52
Saba	34	13	9	12	52	45	48
Teraktor Sazi	34	11	14	9	43	42	47
Saipa	34	12	10	12	48	53	46
Mes	34	11	9	14	55	56	42
Foolad	34	9	15	10	31	34	42
Peykan	34	9	14	11	40	44	41
Malavan	34	10	11	13	31	47	41
Shahin	34	9	12	13	37	37	39
Pas	34	9	11	14	36	44	38
Rah-Ahan	34	9	11	14	36	44	38
Mog'vemat (R)	34	8	13	13	34	45	37
Ab'Moslem (R)	34	7	11	16	36	51	32
Esteghlal A (R)	34	7	9	18	38	60	30

JAPAN

Apr 3: Cerezo 3 Kyoto 1; Albirex 0 Omiya 0; Yokohama 1 Shimizu 2; Nagoya 2 Vissel 0; Montedio 1 Sanfrecce 0; Urawa 2 Shonan 1.
Apr 4: Vegalta 2 Kashima 1; Jubilo 4 Gamba 3; Kawasaki 2 Tokyo 1.
Apr 10: Kyoto 0 Nagoya 2; Shonan 0 Jubilo 0; Sanfrecce 0 Kawasaki 3; Omiya 1 Gamba 3; Albirex 0 Urawa 2; Yokohama 0 Cerezo 0; Tokyo 1 Kashima 1.
Apr 11: Shimizu 5 Vegalta 1; Vissel 0 Montedio 2.
Apr 17: Gamba 1 Shimizu 1; Nagoya 1 Albirex 1; Montedio 0 Yokohama 1; Vegalta 0 Vissel 1; Tokyo 1 Kyoto 1; Jubilo 1 Omiya 1.
Apr 18: Cerezo 2 Shonan 1; Kashima 0 Sanfrecce 0; Urawa 3 Kawasaki 0.
Apr 21: Sanfrecce 1 Nagoya 0.
Apr 24: Kyoto 1 Montedio 2; Shimizu 2 Omiya 1; Kawasaki 3 Vissel 0; Urawa 0 Jubilo 1; Gamba 2 Tokyo 0; Yokohama 1 Kashima 3; Albirex 2 Sanfrecce 2.
Apr 25: Cerezo 0 Nagoya 1; Shonan 1 Vegalta 0.
May 1: Yokohama 1 Jubilo 0; Vissel 1 Albirex 2; Nagoya 2 Montedio 1; Vegalta 1 Cerezo 1; Kashima 2 Gamba 1; Kawasaki 4 Shonan 2; Shimizu 2 Urawa 1; Omiya 2 Kyoto 1; Sanfrecce 2 Tokyo 1.
May 5: Shonan 2 Vissel 2; Kyoto 2 Shimizu 4; Urawa 2 Nagoya 1; Tokyo 0 Vegalta 0; Cerezo 2 Kashima 1; Albirex 2 Yokohama 1; Jubilo 2 Sanfrecce 1; Montedio 1 Omiya 0; Gamba 4 Kawasaki 4.
May 8: Urawa 2 Yokohama 3; Shimizu 0 Albirex 2; Vissel 3 Jubilo 0.
May 9: Vegalta 1 Nagoya 2; Montedio 0 Tokyo 3.
May 15: Tokyo 2 Shimizu 2; Albirex 3 Montedio 1; Yokohama 2 Kyoto 2; Vegalta 1 Urawa 1; Cerezo 2 Vissel 1.
May 16: Jubilo 3 Kawasaki 1; Omiya 0 Sanfrecce 0; Nagoya 1 Kashima 4; Shonan 1 Gamba 3.

JAPAN	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shimizu	12	7	4	1	23	12	25
Nagoya	12	7	1	4	18	14	22
Kashima	11	6	3	2	19	10	21
Urawa	12	6	2	4	18	14	20
Kawasaki	11	6	2	3	22	20	20
Yokohama	12	5	3	4	18	13	18
Albirex	12	4	5	3	14	13	17
Cerezo	11	4	4	3	13	13	16
Sanfrecce	11	4	4	3	12	12	16
Jubilo	12	4	3	5	14	17	15
Gamba	11	3	5	3	21	18	14
Tokyo	12	3	5	4	12	11	14
Montedio	12	4	2	6	11	18	14
Vegalta	12	3	4	5	13	17	13
Vissel	12	3	2	7	12	17	11
Omiya	11	2	3	6	9	14	9
Kyoto	11	2	3	6	14	22	9
Shonan	11	2	3	6	12	20	9

SAUDI ARABIA

SAUDI ARABIA – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Hilal	22	18	2	2	56	18	56
Al Ittihad	22	14	3	5	46	30	45
Al Nasr	22	12	7	3	38	23	43
Al Shabab	22	11	7	4	36	23	40
Al Wahda	22	7	7	8	34	27	28
Al Ahli	22	7	7	8	28	29	28
Al Hazm	22	6	6	10	29	38	24
Al Fateh	22	6	6	10	26	38	24
Al Ittifaq	22	5	7	10	24	30	22
Al Qadisiya	22	5	5	12	20	40	20
Al Raed (R)	22	3	7	12	18	35	16
Najran (R)	22	4	4	14	22	46	16

SOUTH KOREA

SOUTH KOREA	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ulsan	12	7	3	2	17	14	24
Jeju	11	6	4	1	17	9	22
Songnam	11	6	3	2	24	10	21
Seoul	11	7	0	4	22	11	21
Gyeongnam	11	6	3	2	16	9	21
Incheon	12	6	1	5	18	17	19
Busan	11	5	3	3	15	10	18
Chonbuk	10	4	4	2	18	15	16
Gwangju	11	3	4	4	10	14	13
Chunnam	11	3	2	6	17	22	11
Daejeon	11	2	4	5	9	18	10
Pohang	11	2	3	6	14	23	9
Gangwon	12	2	3	7	13	23	9
Daegu	10	2	2	6	12	17	8
Suwon	11	2	1	8	12	22	7

Standings on June 3

OCEANIA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Final

1st leg

Apr 17
Hekari United (PNG) 3 (Jack 27, 73, Maemae 49)
Waitakere United (NZ) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Parsons (Aus)
Hekari: Gabina - Omokirio, C Muta, Manuca (Komeng 76), D Muta (Mela 87), Bolatonga, Jack, Upaiga, Waita, Maemae, Fa'arodo.
Waitakere: Robinson - Rowley, Scott (Pearce 78), Myers, Bullock, Fisher, Totori (Lucas 88), Sykes, Krishna, Emblen, Pelter (Seaman 84).

2nd leg

May 2
Waitakere United 2 (Emblen 3, Fisher pen 84)
Hekari United 1 (Jack pen 35)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Hauata (Tah)
Hekari 4-2 on agg
Waitakere: Robinson - Rowley, Myers, Bullock, Fisher, Totori (Lucas 71), Pearce, Sykes (Pelter 63), Krishna (De Vries 58), Emblen, Butler.
Hekari: Gabina - Omokirio, C Muta, Manuca (Waroi 81), D Muta, Bolatonga, Jack, Upaiga, Waita, Maemae, Fa'arodo.

FORTHCOMING FIXTURES

June 29/30
UEFA Champions League first qualifying round, first leg
July 6/7
UEFA Champions League first qualifying round, second leg
July 11
World Cup Final
July 13/14
UEFA Champions League second qualifying round, first leg
July 20/21
UEFA Champions League second qualifying round, second leg
July 27/28
UEFA Champions League third qualifying round, first leg

Famous Last Words

Who said what and why

"Come to my house and you'll see if I'm gay. And bring your sister"

Zlatan Ibrahimovic's response to a female reporter's questions about a photograph of him and Barcelona team-mate Gerard Pique

"If we win the World Cup, I will run naked around the El Obelisco in the centre of Buenos Aires"
Argentina coach Diego Maradona reveals all

Heaven help us...Maradona

French success...Platini (right) greets Sarkozy

"I simply don't have any faith in the national team coach. Therefore, whatever happens, I'm not available"
Former Germany midfielder Torsten Frings isn't exactly a big fan of *Bundestrainer* Joachim Low

"He should shut his mouth"
Cameroon star Samuel Eto'o loses his cool when criticised for a lack of effort in national team colours by Indomitable Lion icon Roger Milla

"To be frank, I don't expect any of my players to return for pre-season training as world champions"
Bayern Munich boss Louis Van Gaal endears himself to his German, Dutch, Argentinian and French World Cup participants

"Grandad, you're finished"
Name-calling Internazionale bad boy Mario Balotelli provokes Franceso Totti into an act of revenge which gets Roma's veteran sent off

"Yes, it's a little strange but it's necessary all the same"
Chile coach Marcelo Bielsa breaks all the rules by organising two World Cup warm-up games against Norther Ireland and Israel on the same day in two different Chilean towns

"Hey, guy. Why put your leg where I'm driving?"
Maradona runs over an Argentinian pressman waiting for him to announce his World Cup squad

"It's incredible how far Brazil are behind already"
FIFA general secretary Jerome Valcke sounds the alarm bell as to Brazil's state of (un)preparedness to stage World Cup 2014

"Platini was not neutral. He only shook the hand of our country's president, while personally introducing Mr Sarkozy [the French president] to each member of the UEFA executive committee"
Turkish federation vice-president Servet Yardimci claims conspiracy after the French pip his nation in the ballot to be Euro 2016 hosts

"The media set out to find little things to destabilise us"
Bordeaux midfield ace Yoann Gourcuff shoots the messenger for his club's springtime collapse

"Boredom by Ranieri? Is it like Sartre's Nausea, which I used to study?"
Jose Mourinho goes all literary after his arch-rival, Roma coach Claudio Ranieri, calls him boring

"The kids no longer identify with local teams here. In Algiers, the biggest rivalry is between Barca and Real Madrid"
Kheireddine Zetchi, the chairman of Algerian club Paradou bemoans the lack of interest in the domestic football scene

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